

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning
TROUBLE of MIND,
AND THE
Disease of Melancholly.

In Three PARTS.

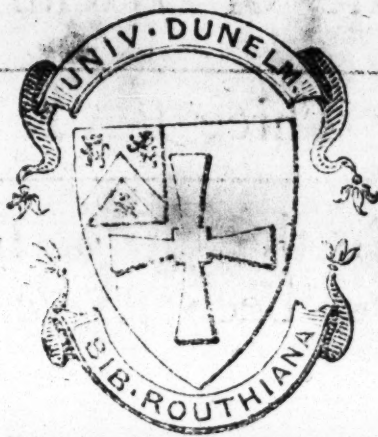
Written for the Use of such as are,
or have been Exercised by the
same.

By TIMOTHY ROGERS, M. A.
who was long afflicted with both.

To which are Annexed,
Some LETTERS from several DIVINES,
relating to the same Subject.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst*, and *Thomas Cockerill*,
at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside*; and at
the *Three Legs* in the *Poultry*, MDCXCII.



To the very much
HONOURED and RESPECTED

LADY,
The Lady MARY LANE.

MADAM,

YOUR LADYSHIP has
a very just claim to this
DEDICATION; and
under your Patronage
this BOOK can with good affu-
rance venture abroad: You, more
than any other, have enquired of
me concerning the following Trea-
tise, and more frequently urged
me to Print it. You were pleased
to Honour me, during my long
Affliction, with your kind Visits;
and though I was greatly afflicted,
and in degrees beyond what are

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very common to Men, yet you did not a little revive me by your Compassionate and Gentle words, and by the Charitable hopes that you had of my deliverance, though you have often heard me say, That I should never be delivered. I thought that I should never have any more ease in my pained Body, nor ever any more hope or quiet in my troubled Soul: But that God who is Omnipotent, and who heard your Prayers, and the Prayers of many others in my behalf, hath wrought a double Salvation for me: He who is the Lord of Nature, has healed my Body; and He who is *the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Grace*, has given rest to my weary Soul. None have any Cause to presume, when they consider what miseries I felt for a long time, and how I was overwhelmed with the deepest sorrows; for many doleful
Months

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Months together ; neither have any cause to despair , they cannot be more low, more near to Death and Hell than I thought my self to be, and yet I live, and am not without some refreshing hope of God's acceptance, and can say with the Prophet, *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: And with him is plenteous redemption.*

Your L A D Y S H I P has never, indeed, been afflicted with that Distemper and those Anxieties of Soul whereof I treat in the following Book, and I heartily pray you never may : For M E L A N C H O L L Y is the worst of all Distempers ; and those sinking and guilty Fears which it brings along with it, are inexpressibly dreadful. But I know that you have been in manifold Afflictions, and you have had several very great Losses : You lost some years ago a Father, who was, indeed, in all re-

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spects, for his Holiness, his Even-temper, and his Publick and Charitable Spirit, worthy to be loved; and I am sure you greatly loved him, as he you, to the very last. You lost a Mother, whom all that knew her, greatly valued for the skill and experience that she had in matters of Religion, and especially for her admirable acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; and tho in the latter part of her Life, she saw not the Light of this World, yet her Soul was recreated with a Light Spiritual and Divine; and the loss of her sight was abundantly recompenced to her, by the clearer views which she had of God, and of a Life to come. And not to mention other Losses, you have lost several Children, in whom there was all the sweetness of youth, all that good temper, and those blooming appearances of hopefulness which could make such
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little Plants desirable ; but you have born even so great a Loss with a submissive and a Christian Patience, as knowing that you have not so much cause to mourn for those that are gone, as to rejoyce in those that are left ; and who are a very great Comfort to you ; and may they long be so.

As I have had for some time heretofore, the Honour to sojourn in your Family, I always observed in you that Meekness and Good Temper, that Affability and Condescension to your Inferiors, which made your Conversation very exemplary, and made it easie and pleasant for any persons to be in your House. If all the Ladies and Women in the World that are called *Good*, were of a Temper so happy as your Ladyship's, What a quiet and peaceable World should we then have ! The mutual Love in which Sir

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T H O M A S and You live, renders, indeed, the Married state very excellent and Honourable.

I thought, when I came to describe my inward Troubles, I should have described them much more largely; but I durst not review them too particularly, lest the very thoughts of them, should again, in some measure, overwhelm me: And, indeed, *Inward Terrors, are things that may be sadly felt; but they cannot be fully express'd.* To have the sense of Tormenting, Racking Pain, the immediate prospect of Death, and together with this, an apprehension of God's Displeasure, and the fear of being cast out of his Glorious Presence for ever, this was a part of my Case; And who can describe that Anguish and Tribulation, which such apprehensions cause in a desolate and a mourning Soul! I have in the following Treatise

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tise said as much as will, I suppose, be believed by those who have never been in such a woful state; and if I had said more, it might perhaps sink some poor souls, who are already low enough; and if I cannot help them, which I design, yet I will be sure, as far as in me lies, not to make them worse.

M A D A M, I could say a great many excellent things of your L A D Y S H I P, and which, in the opinion of all that have the happiness to be acquainted with you, would be no flattery; but I know your Virtues are Illustrious, and evident enough of themselves, without my endeavouring to place them in a more open Light. Excuse, I entreat you, the boldness of this DEDICATION, in which, to speak sincerely, I have a great deal of selfishness; for I question not, but by the means of your Name, this B O O K will be
more

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more publick, and so be more serviceable to people under long and sore afflictions, whereof this miserable World is very full. I wish you a continuance of the Blessings of Heaven, with those of this Earth, which you have in great abundance; And that the *Candle of the Lord* may constantly shine on your *Tabernacle*, on Sir Thomas, your Self, and all your Children; and I desire you to be assured, That there is none, that more heartily prays for your present and Eternal welfare, than

London,
Sept. 8.
1691.

Honoured M A D A M,

Your Ladyship's Most

Obliged Servant,

TIMOTHY ROGERS.

THE
PREFACE:

CONTAINING

Several Advices to the Relations and
Friends of Melancholly People.

THERE is a very great difference between such as are only under trouble of Conscience, and such whose Bodies are greatly diseased at the same time: A sense of Sin, and great sorrow for it, may in some persons not change at all their former state of health; and the mercy of God may so speedily relieve them, that they suffer no visible decays in their Constitution, but are so happy as to have a sound Mind and Body both at once. 'Tis not with relation to such that I write this Preface; but for such as are under a deep, and a rooted Melancholly: And to the Friends of such I think it is very necessary to give the following Advices.

First,

I.

First, Look upon your distressed Friends, as under one of the worst Distempers to which this Miserable Life is obnoxious. Melancholly seizes on the Brain and Spirits, and incapacitates them for Thought or Action; it confounds and disturbs all their thoughts, and unavoidably fills them with anguish and vexation; of which there is no resemblance in any other Distemper, unless it be that of a Raging Fever. I take it for granted, and I verily believe, I say nothing but what is true; When this ugly Humour is deeply fixed, and hath spread its Malignant Influence over every part, 'tis as vain a thing to strive against it, as to strive against a Fever, or a Plurisie, the Gout, or the Stone, which are very grievous to Nature, but which a man by resolution, and the force of briskness and courage cannot help. One would be glad to be rid of such oppressing things, but all our striving will not make them go away. And of all the Inconveniences of Melancholly, The want of sleep, which it usually brings along with it, is one of the worst. It is very reviving to a man that is in pain all the day, to think that he shall sleep at night; but when he has no prospect nor hope of that for several nights together, oh, what confusion does then seize upon

upon him! he is then like one upon a rack, whose anguish will not suffer him to rest; by this means the Faculties of the Soul are weakned, and all its Operations disturbed and clouded, and the poor Body languishes and pines away at the same time. And this Disease is more formidable than any other, because it commonly lasts very long; It is a long time before it come to its height, and usually as long ere it decline again; and all this long season of its continuance, is full of fear and torment, of horror and amazement. It is in every respect sad and overwhelming; it is a state of darkness that has no discernable beams of Light. 'Tis as a Land of darkness, on which no Sun at all seems to shine. It does generally indeed first begin at the Body, and then conveys its venom to the Mind; and if any thing could be found that might keep the Blood and Spirits in their due temper and motion, this would obstruct its further progress, and in a great measure keep the Soul clear. I pretend not to tell you what Medicines are proper to remove it, and I know of none; I leave you to advise with such as are learned in the Profession of Physick, and especially to have recourse to such Doctors as have themselves felt it; for it is impossible fully to understand the nature of it any other way than

* In his
Comfort for
Afflicted
Consciences,
p. 137.

than by Experience: and that Person is highly to be valued, whose endeavours God will bless to the removal of this obstinate and violent Disease. And as old Mr. Greenham says; * There is a great deal of wisdom requisite to consider both the state of the Body, and of the Soul. If a man, saith he, that is troubled in Conscience, come to a Minister, it may be, he will look all to the Soul, and nothing to the Body; if he come to a Physician, he considereth the Body, and neglecteth the Soul: for my part, I would never have the Physician's Counsel despised, nor the Labour of the Minister neglected; because the Soul and Body dwelling together, it is convenient, that as the Soul should be cured, by the Word, by Prayer, by Fasting, or by Comforting; so the Body must be brought into some temperature, by Physick, and Diet, by harmless Diversions, and such like ways; providing always, that it be so done in the fear of God, as not to think by these ordinary means quite to smother or evade our Troubles, but to use them as preparatives, whereby our Souls may be made more capable of the spiritual Methods that are to follow afterwards.

Secondly,

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II.

Secondly, Look upon those that are under this woful Disease of Melancholly with great pity and compassion. And pity them the more, by considering that you your selves are in the body, and liable to the very same trouble; for how brisk, how sanguine, and how chearful soever you be, yet you may meet with those heavy Crosses, those long and painful and sharp Afflictions which may sink your spirits. Many that are far from being naturally inclined to Melancholly, have been accidentally overwhelmed with it, by the loss of Children, by some sudden and unlooked for disappointment that ruines all their former Projects and Designs: O let every groan that you hear from persons so afflicted, deeply affect your hearts; and never look upon them but with a compassionate and a concerned eye; never look upon them, but make this use to your selves. Man at his best Estate is altogether vanity. Let it wean you from the world, when you see that by such a Disease as this, a man is quickly taken off of all his business, and unfit to manage his Affairs, or to pursue his former most delightful work. Melancholly is a complication of violent and sore Distresses; 'tis full of miseries; 'tis it self a fierce Affliction, and brings to our Thoughts and to our Bodies one Evil fast upon another:

ther: Any other Distemper may trouble us, but this does astonish and amaze. O look upon your Friends in this case with great tenderness, for they, alas, are wounded both in Soul and Body; and in all the world there are none for the time in so doleful a state as they: They are usually walking as in the midst of Fire and Brimstone; and most frequently under the very pangs of death, and the pains of Hell; in great bodily danger, and in no less spiritual Calamity: Their Burthen is very often heavier than their groaning; their sighs are deep, their hearts are sunk, their minds are in a flame, and they are fallen very low: They are thinking on what is sad and frightful, and they cannot banish those Idea's that are so terrible. If you saw a person wounded, and torn and mangled on the High-way, the sight of so deplorable an Object would fill you with compassion; the sight of your Friends under this Disease which I am now speaking of, ought much more to move you, for it is every moment tearing them to pieces; every moment it preys upon their Vitals, and they are continually dying, and yet cannot dye. When you visit a Melancholly person, make this Reflection. This Friend of mine awhile ago rejoiced in the love of God as I do; he met with me in Holy Assemblies,
and

and sung the Praises of the Most High with as pleasant a countenance, with as chearful an heart as I; and now he is in despair, and horror, and mourning; now his Visage and his Language is changed, and he is all dissolved in bitterness, and tears, and woe; Oh how vain a thing is man! how terrible is it to fall into the hands of the Living God! my poor Friend under a sense of God's displeasure does never eat nor drink with pleasure: he is covered with sadness, whilst I rejoice in the blessings of Providence; I will by this Example learn to improve my own mercies, and to have a great tenderness for such as are brought so very low. If, (as Mr. Peacock in his distress said) you did but feel their grief for one hour, you would have great compassion on them; every one of their tears and sighs has this Language, in which the Poor afflicted Job spoke to his hard-hearted Visitors, chap. 19. 21. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me!

Thirdly, Do not use harsh Speeches to your Friends when they are under the disease of Melancholly. III. they may fret and perplex, and enrage them more, but
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they will never do them the least good. Some indeed will advise you to chide and rebuke them upon all occasions; but I dare confidently say, such Advisers never felt this Disease; for if they had, they would know that by such a method they do but pour oyl into the flame, and chafe and exasperate their wounds instead of healing them. Mr. Dod, by reason of his mild, meek and merciful spirit, was reckoned one of the fittest persons to deal with People thus afflicted. Never was any Minister more tender and compassionate, as those will find that read the Account of Mr. Peacock, and Mrs. Drake, who by his means were very much revived. If you would be serviceable to such Persons, you must not vex them with harsh and rigorous discourse: it causes many poor Souls to cherish and conceal their troubles to their greater torment, because they meet with very harsh entertainment from those to whom they have begun to explain their case. Our Blessed Lord, and Principal Physician, was meek and lowly, and would not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. And the first Visit that the forementioned Mr. Dod made to Mr. Peacock in his Anguish, was to put him in mind of God's kindness, * whereof he shewed to him four parts. 1. To take
small

* See Mr. Peacock's Visitation, p. 6.

Small things in good part: 2. To pass by Infirmities. 3. To be easily entreated. 4. To be entreated for the greatest. You must use with such, a great deal of prudence and gentleness, not upon every occasion to thwart and contradict them; with love you may do them much good, but in anger none at all: If you be severe in your speeches, they'll never be persuaded that it is in kindness, and so not regard at all what you say; nay, your sharp words pierce as so many Daggers to their hearts, and make that inward Fever, that burns them, to be more hot and scorching: But of all Persons, Ministers are especially to be blamed, who when they find poor Sinners even overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, with the terrors of God, and slain by the Law, do still set the Law more and more home upon them; which is indeed to throw them down lower, but not the way to raise them up; it is to widen and enflame, but not to remove and heal their wounds; and to such that of the Prophet may be very justly applied, Ezek. 34. 4. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which

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was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. *And then the poor distressed Soul is more distressed by their harsh Language, and is apt to conclude against it self, and to say, If the Ministers of Christ speak so severely to me, what will Christ himself do? and this is raking in the wounds that are already very sore and smarting. Such a Minister is as an Angel that troubles the waters more, that were before troubled; but not an Angel of peace to bring glad tidings to a weary Soul. They would not complain no more than you, if they were not in violent anguish and perplexity. For as Job says, ch. 6. 5. Doth the wild Ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the Ox over his fodder? And again, to the sharp Expressions of his Friends, he says, Job 16. 3, 4, 5. Miserable Comforters are ye all! shall vain words have an end? I also could speak as you do. If your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you: But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief. When their Souls are already full of sorrow, a little more will make them overflow. When they are weakened with several assaults, a small stroke will throw them to the ground: and a Sore that*

that is continually rubbed and chafed, cannot be cured. But of this I have spoken in the following Treatise, p. 80.

IV.

Fourthly, You must be so kind to your Friends under this Disease, as to believe what they say. Or however, that their apprehensions are such as they tell you they are; do not you think that they are at ease when they say they are in pain. It is a foolish course which some take with their melancholly Friends, to answer all their Complaints and Moans with this, 'That it's nothing but Fancy; nothing but Imagination and Whimsey. It is a Real Disease, a Real Misery that they are tormented with: and if it be Fancy, yet a diseased Fancy is as great a Disease as any other; it fills them with anguish and tribulation: But this so disordered Fancy is the consequent of a greater Evil, and one of the sad effects that are produced by that black Humour that has vitiated all the natural spirits. These afflicted persons can never possibly believe that you pity them, or that you are heartily concerned for them, if you do not credit what they say; and truly it often falls out, that because Melancholly persons do not always look very ill, or have pretty good stomachs, and do not at first very much decline

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in their Bodies, other persons that know nothing of the Distemper, are apt to think that they make themselves worse than they are: whereas, alas, they are so grieved, that they need not, neither will they counterfeit any more grief. In all other Evils people take for granted what others say, and accordingly sympathise with them; but in this they are apt to contradict and oppose such as are distressed; and as long as they do so, cannot pity them as they ought: This makes the grief of such to overwhelm and strangle them within, because when they disclose it, they find it is to no purpose; and do but in this case as you would have others do to you; suppose when you have the Toothach, or Headach, and people, when you complain, should tell you 'tis nothing but Fancy, would not you think their carriage to be full of cruelty? and would it not vex you to find that you cannot be believed?

V. *Fifthly, Do not urge your Friends under the Disease of Melancholly, to things which they cannot do. They are as persons whose bones are broken, and that are in great pain and anguish, and consequently under an incapacity for action: their Disease is full of perplexed tormenting thoughts; if it were possible by any means*

inno-

innocently to divert them, you would do them a great kindness; but by no means press them to any thing that requires more intense thinking; or that by fixing their minds, will force them to muse and pore more; by the doing of which, they are already very miserable: it puts them into a more anxious ferment, when you are continually fretting them with the doing of this or that, to which it may be they have no more power, than a man that hath broke his Leg, hath to run. Be not noisy or clamorous with them; but know, that silence and quietness are most favourable to their desolate Condition. You know that they are overwhelmed with sorrows, and grief is a very unactive sluggish thing; the vehemence of this, weakens the natural spirits, and blunts the Soul, and renders its conceptions very languishing, and confused. But perhaps you will say, Must we not urge them to hear the Word of God? I answer, If they are so far gone in the Disease, as to be in continual unintermitting anguish, they are not capable of hearing, because of the many great pains which they most frequently have at the same time: but if their Distemper is not yet come to such a terrible height, you may indeed press them to hear, but at the same time you must use a great

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of prudence, and not persuade them with too much peremptoriness or vehemence; strive to convince them of their duty by love, and by good words. In which case Jacob's pace with his Flocks, with such, is the best and safest way, to drive them gently, especially seeing they are big with fear and perplexity: You may win much upon them by a mild, a sweet and affable carriage; and if you imitate the Friends of Mrs. Drake, you will not do amiss; and therefore I will mention their practise as I find it in her Life. * 'The burthen with which she had overloaded her self was so great, that we never durst add any thereunto, but fed her with all encouragements, she being too apt to overcharge her self, and to despair upon any addition of fuel unto that Fire which already was kindled in her: And so where-soever she went to hear, notice was still given, so to manage the business, that the Minister might know that he had an Hearer thus qualified; and by this means she received no discouragement in hearing of the Word.

* See Mrs. Drake Reviewed, p. 82.

VI. Sixthly, Do not attribute the effects of meer Disease, to the Devil; though I deny not that the Devil has an hand in the causing of several Diseases: The Envy
and

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and rage that he is filled with, prompts him to disturb the health and peace of men; and by God's permission, no doubt, he brings a great many sicknesses upon them. As we know in the Case of Job, he filled him all over with tormenting Sores, which brought the poor man into a very great Melancholly, and wofully by that means perplexed him with spiritual terror and amazement. But notwithstanding all this, it is a very overwhelming thing, to attribute every action almost of a Melancholly man to the Devil, when there are some unavoidable Expressions of sorrow which are purely natural, and which he cannot help, no more than any other sick man can forbear to groan and sigh. Many persons will say to such, Why do you so pore and muse, and gratify the Devil? whereas it is the very nature of the Disease to cause such fixed Musings; and they may as well say, Why are you diseased? why will you not be well? Their so musing proceeds from a violent pressure on their spirits, which they are not able to remove, some think that Melancholly persons are pleased with their Distemper; but I verily believe, as little as a man that lies on thorns or bryars, or as one that is thrown into a fiery Furnace. It is vastly painful to them to be in this condition; and they cannot

not be supposed so far to hate themselves as to be fond of pain. The Devil is indeed very busie to work during the darkness of a Soul; he throws in his Bombs, and his fiery Darts; to amaze us more when we are compassed with the Terrors of a dismal Night, he is bold and undaunted in his Assaults, and injects with a quick and sudden malice a thousand monstrous and abominable thoughts of God, and which at the same time seem to be the motions of our own minds, and so do most terribly grieve and trouble us. And alas, we too too often comply with his Designs; we are usually then under great unbelief, and too often we think of God, and of our selves, as he would have us think: But yet if you be speaking in every Action of Melancholly Persons, that it is from this Evil Spirit, you will, as it is easie to fix any sort of direful Impressions on such as are overcome with fear, persuade them, it may be, at length, that they are possesst, and that all that they do, is from him, when at the same time they are pained in every part; and then finding themselves unable to get out of their distress, your Discourses plunge them very low in misery. I would not have you to bring a Railing Accusation against the Devil, so as to attribute to him a thousand things, wherein he has no hand at all; neither

neither must you falsely accuse your friends, by saying, that they gratify him, when they do not so: Consider how ill you would take it, to be so used, if you were in their Case; or consider, That to be without Temptation, is the greatest Temptation.

Seventhly, Do not much wonder at any thing that they say or do. What will not people do that are in Despair! What will they not say, that think themselves lost for ever! What strange extravagant Actions do you see those do that are under the power of fear! And none are so much afraid as these poor people are; they are afraid of God, of Hell, and of their own sorrows. You need not much wonder at them, when you know that even so great a Man as Job cursed his day, and talked of God with much more freedom and boldness than he ought to have done; and the Lord himself said, that he darkned Counsel by words without knowledg. Do not think it strange, if they very much complain, for their grief causes them to speak; you know the Tongue will always be speaking of the Aking Tooth. Their soul is sore vexed; and tho it's true, they get no good by complaining; yet they cannot but complain, to find themselves in such a doleful Case: And tho they can say
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with David, Psal. 6. 6. I am weary with my groaning ; all the night make I my bed to swim, I water my couch with tears ; yet they cannot forbear to groan and weep more, till their very eyes be consumed with grief. Let no Carriage of theirs provoke you to passion ; let no sharp words of theirs make you to talk sharply : Sick persons are generally very peevish ; and it will be a very great weakness in you, not to bear with them, when you see that a long and sore disease hath deprived them of their former good Temper. Do not you find in Scripture several instances of Men that have uttered woful complaints ? That have said, Their Hope was perisht ? That the Wrath of God laid hard upon them ? That against them his Terrors were set in array ? That their Prayers were shut out ? That their Iniquities were gone over their heads ? That they were as spectacles of Reproach, and the scorn and wonder of other Men ? Do not therefore wonder at any thing that your Friends, under great trouble, say.

VIII. *Eighthly, Do not mention to them any formidable Things, nor tell, in their hearing, any sad Stories ; because they do already Meditate Terror ; and by every sad thing*

thing that they hear of, are much more terrified; their troubled Imagination is prepared to fix upon any mournful thing; and by that means, will multiply its own sorrows. The hearing of sad things, causes in them more violent Agitations, and throws them into great disorders, having the same effects in them, that Storms and Thunder have in Nature, and which strike a Terror into Men. You must know, that they are very ingenious in heightning every doleful thing; And to argue thus, If it be so dreadful to be so cruelly used, so tormented, so enslaved, How dreadful then is my condition, that have God against me, and am like to be in Hell for ever! Studiously avoid all Discourse of what is grievous to them; and yet you must not be too merry before them neither; for then they think you slight their Miseries, and have no pity for them. A mixture of affableness and gravity will suit their Condition best; and if I might advise, I would desire Parents not to put those Children, who are naturally Melancholly, to be Scholars, or to any Employment that requires much Study; for that will engage them perhaps to think too much, and at last they will be overwhelmed with uneasie thoughts.

Ninthly,

IX. *Ninthly*, Do not think it altogether needless to talk with them; *only when you do so*, do not speak as if their Troubles would be very long: *It is the length of their Trouble that amazes them*, when after one Week, or Month, without Sleep, or Rest, or Hope, *still the next Week and Month is as painful and as terrible to them as the former was*; and this many times pushes them forward to seek to destroy themselves, because they see no period of their Miseries, and their Anguish is both tedious and insupportable. Some of the Platonists thought that a Man might dislodge his soul by abstracted contemplation, and turn it into the World of Spirits by the meer force of Thought; but this is nothing else but talk; for if any could so dye, none would more frequently do so than Melancholly Persons, whose disease is earnest, intense, undiverted thinking, and yet they cannot dye for all that: Of it self, it very rarely kills any person. Revive them therefore, by telling them, that God can create deliverance for them in a moment; That he has often done so with others; That he can quickly cure their Disease, and shew them his Reconciled, Amiable Face, tho it has been hid from them for a long season. You will convey to them some little support by
such

such discourse as this. Tell them, that it may be, in a little time their groans shall be turned into praises, and that God will satisfy them early with his Mercies, and make them glad according to the days wherein he hath afflicted them, and the years wherein they have seen evil. Tho they are like the burning bush, yet they shall not be consumed; and that there shall be more sweetness in the deliverance, than there was bitterness in the Cross; And that hereafter they may have cause to say with David, Psal. 43. 4. I will go unto the Altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy. And that it will make their joys more pleasant, when they come after so long sadness; as to a Man that hath laid all the Night long in Waking Pain, the Morning- Rest is very sweet: And let them remember, that the Greatest Mourner in Israel, was the sweet Singer of Israel. Pain, indeed, makes the Time seem to go on very slowly, an hour seems a day, and a day a week; but if you can, by the Blessing of God, give them any hope, that they may once be delivered, they will be sensibly refreshed, and will be enabled to Pray and Read; none of which they can do whilest they are in deep Despair; but when you talk with them, you must, as I have said before, by

no means thwart, or contradict them, but allow *what they say*; or taking for granted that *what they say is true*, then to proceed with what applications you think most proper to their Case upon such a supposition; and if you think they were truly good people, and sincere in their Conversation, before this woful distemper seized them, Let them know what you think, and that you have charitable hopes of their Salvation, however it shall please God to deal with them as to Temporal deliverance.

- X. Ten'bly, Tell them of others who have been in such Anguish, and under such a terrible Distemper, and yet have been delivered. It is very hard indeed to persuade a person under great pain and anguish, and a sense of the Wrath of God, and a fear of Hell, that ever any has heretofore been so perplext as he: Such generally think themselves worse than Cain or Judas, or any the most wicked People in the World, as thinking that their sins have greater aggravations, and that consequently they shall be more miserable; but you may acquaint them with several instances of God's Gracious dealing with others, after they have been for many Months and

Tears

Years afflicted. I could send you to some now alive, that were long afflicted with Trouble of Mind, and Melancholly, as Mr. Rosewell, and Mr. Porter, both Ministers, the latter whereof was six years oppressed with this distemper; and now they both rejoyce in the Light of God's Countenance. I myself was near two years in great pain of Body, and greater pain of Soul, and without any prospect of peace, or help; and yet God hath revived me in his Sovereign Grace and Mercy; and there have been several heretofore sorely perplex'd with great inward and outward trouble, whom God, after that, wonderfully refresh'd. Mr. Robert Bruce, some time ago Minister at Edinburgh, was Twenty years in terrors of Conscience, and yet delivered afterwards. You may also direct them to the Lives of Mrs. Brettergh, Mrs. Drake, Mr. Peacock, and Mrs. Wight, where they will see a very chearful day returning, after a black and stormy night; and that the Issue from their Afflictions, was more glorious than their Conflict was troublesom; They went forth weeping, they sowed in Tears, but they reaped an Harvest of wonderful Joys afterwards. You have in the Book of Martyrs, written by Mr. Fox,

*an instance of Mr. Glover, who was worn and consumed with inward trouble for the space of Five years, that he neither had any comfort in his Meat, nor any quietness of Sleep, nor any pleasure of Life; he was so perplexed as if he had been in the deepest Pit of Hell; yet at last, this good Servant of God, after so sharp temptations, and the strong buffetings of Satan, was freed from all his trouble, and was thereby framed to great Mortification, and was like one already placed in Heaven, and led a Life altogether Celestial, abhorring in his mind all prophane things; and you have a remarkable instance of mighty joy in Mr. Holland a Minister, who having the day before he died, meditated upon the 8th of the Romans, he cried on a sudden, Stay your Reading, What brightness is it that I see! They told him it was the Sun-shine: Nay, saith he, my Saviour's shine. Now, farewell World, and welcome Heaven; the day-star from on high hath visited my heart; O speak it when I am gone, and let it be Preached at my Funeral, God deal-eth familiarly with Man. I feel his Mercy, I see his Majesty, whether in the Body, or out of the Body, God he knoweth, but I see things unutterable: And in the Morn-
ing*

ing following, he shut up his blessed Life, with these blessed words, O! what an happy change shall I make, from Night to Day, from Darkness to Light, from Death to Life, from Sorrow to Solace, from a factious World, to an Heavenly Being! O! my dear Friends, it pitieth me to leave you behind; yet remember what I now feel, I hope you shall find ere you dye, That God doth, and will deal familiarly with Men. And now thou fiery Chariot, that came down to fetch up Eliah, carry me to my happy hold; and all the blessed Angels who attended the soul of Lazarus, to bring it up to Heaven, bear me, O bear me into the bosome of my best Beloved: Amen, Amen. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. And so he fell asleep. See this, and several other instances in Mr. Robert Bolton's Instructions for afflicted Consciences, p. 87. and 235, &c.

Eleventhly, The next kindness you are to shew to your Melancholly Friends, is heartily to pray for them. Let your eyes weep for them in secret, and there let your souls melt in fervent holy Prayers; they are not able in a composed or a lively manner, to recommend their own Case to God; you may use many arguments in your Prayers,

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their forlorn state, and the greatness of their miseries may be a very powerful motive to your Supplications: You know that none but God himself can help them. For as Mr. Greenham says, If our assistance were as an Host of Armed Soldiers, if our Friends were the Princes and Governors of the Earth, if our Possessions were as large as between the East and the West, if our Meat were as Mannah from Heaven, if our Apparel were as costly as the Ephod of Aaron; if every day were as glorious as the day of Christ's Resurrection; yet if our Minds are appalled with the Judgments of God, all these things would not yield us any help or consolation. And you must wrestle with him on their behalf; you may plead with him, That his Power, and Goodness, will be more illustrious, if he save those, whom none but he himself can save; and that his Grace will be more remarkable, if he please to create Peace for those troubled Souls, in which none but he can make a Calm; and you know not but that his Light, on your request, may begin to shine on those who have bewailed his absence with many dreadful groans: And tho your eyes be even weary with looking upwards, yet continue still to wait and pray; for it shall not be in vain. Thus you will do them a great kindness, and*

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* See Mr. Greenham's Comfort for an Afflicted Conscience, p. 27.

perform your own Duty, tho perhaps they may be ready to say to you, as Mr. Peacock to his Friends, Take not the Name of God in vain, by praying for a Reprobate. And as Mr. Dod said to him, when he said he could not pray, Tho, saith he, most sicknesses hinder Prayer, and therefore the Apostle James says, If any Man be sick, let him send for the Elders, &c. Yet if God stir up your Friends to pray for you, he will stir up himself to hear their Prayers. And do you consider, that nothing but Prayer can do them good. It is an obstinate disease, that nothing else will overcome; for it is a very slight Melancholly, and which is not deeply rooted, that can be drowned in Wine, or chased away with sociable divertisements. Some, indeed, tell us, When they find themselves troubled, their way is to bid their thoughts Battel, and to oppose Thoughts against Thoughts, and with the dint of Reason, to subdue this peevish Humour: But such must give me leave to say, That they are not under the disease of Melancholly; for that will neither hear Faith nor Reason, till God himself by his Almighty Power, work Salvation for us.

XII.

XII. Not only pray for them, but get other serious Christians to pray for them also. *When many good people join their requests together, the cry is more acceptable and prevalent. When those in the Acts joined to remember Peter in his Chains, he was after that very soon delivered, and in the very time of their Prayers. All believers have through Jesus Christ a great interest in Heaven; and the Father is willing to grant what they beg in the Name of his dear Son. I my self have been greatly helped by the prayers of others, and I heartily thank all those that kept any particular days wherein more solemnly to remember my distressed condition; blessed be God that has not cast off their prayer, nor turned away his mercy from me. Every day gives us several experiences of many that have been rescued from their diseases, their temptations, and their fears, by the Prayers of others. And I might also add, you have very great cause to pray for your selves that God may give you strength to bear so heavy a Cross, as you are afflicted with, in the afflictions of your friends. Their doleful complaints, their repeated groans, and their long and sore trials, are enough to sink you too, if God do not give you wonderful support. You have need to beg strong faith,*
and

and great patience, that you may not be unhinged with their passionate or hasty speeches.

XIII. Put your poor Friends in mind of the Sovereign Grace of God in Jesus Christ; *often put them in mind, that he is merciful and gracious; that as far as the Heavens are above the Earth, so far are his thoughts above their thoughts; his thoughts of mercy and love, above their self-condemning guilty thoughts. Teach them as much as you can to look up to God by the Great Mediator, for Grace and strength, and not too much to pore on their own souls, where there is so much darkness and unbelief. And seek to divert them from puzzling themselves too much with God's secret and unknown Decrees, and strive to help them to believe in Christ, which is their certain duty; shew them what great sinners God has pardoned, and how he is merciful, because he will be merciful; finding motives to help them, from their very miseries, and from his own gracious nature. Thus I find they dealt with Mrs. Drake, she would send to several Ministers to know, concealing her name, Whether such and such a Creature, without Faith, Hope, Love to God or Man, hard-hearted, without natural affection, who*

had rejected all means, nor could submit to the same, yet might have any hope to go to Heaven? *And they returned for Answer, That such like and much worse (though as bad as Manasseh) might by the mercy of God be received into favour, converted and saved; which did much allay her trouble.* For, (said she) the Fountain of all my misery hath been, that I sought for that in the Law, which I should have found in the Gospel; and for that in my self, which was only to be found in Christ.

See her
Life, pag.
147.

This is what I thought necessary to say to you; and you will find, the course I have mentioned, being taken with your Friends, will do them no prejudice. I do not speak only with borrowed expressions in this matter, nor without some experience. The mild and the gentle way of dealing, I know very well you'll find to be the best, and the way of roughness and severity will but aggravate and increase their miseries. And I desire you that are yet healthful and chearful, to improve your health; for if ever this distemper seize you, you will be able to do nothing for your Souls or Bodies. You may have time, but such will be your anguish, that you will not be able to do any thing to purpose in that time. This Book has a peculiar Relation to the distresses of the mind; for as to what
concerns

concerns that bodily pain that I had with my inward trouble, I have largely shewed what it was in my Practical Discourses on Sickness and Recovery, that were published about a year ago. And what a mercy it is to have our afflictions sanctified, and to bear the yoke in our Youth, I have explained in my Treatise of Early Religion lately published, which is peculiarly designed for young people; and if God bless it to their good, it may help them to avoid those awful Terrors which many others have groaned under.

*I think I could in the composing of the following Book have used a little more exactness, had I set my self studiously to do so, and by that means it might have been more pleasant to the Reader, but not so well have served my design; for according to that old saying, *Æger non quærit medicum Eloquentem sed sanantem.* A Physician that can remove the disease, is more welcome to the sick than one that can talk finely about it, but do him no good; and if the Cure be performed, 'tis no matter tho the potion was not extremely sweetned. I purposely avoided all pretence to a regular smoothness of stile, because that the Ears of people in great affliction, are not so tender and so delicate as theirs are, who are*

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in heaith. I know that the Age in which we live, is very curious and critical, and that the English Language has been within a few years greatly polished and improved; and Religion deserves the best words we can find, wherewith to express our thoughts. And in Eccles. 12. 10. 'tis said, The Preacher sought out acceptable words; by which, I suppose, he means, words that were grateful, as well as profitable. I hope the Reader will not find either Bombast, or slovenliness in my expressions; and if in them there is not, as I do not pretend there is, an accomplished beauty, yet that at least they are not all deformity. Whatever some persons may say, I think it my duty to express my thoughts not altogether in a neglected and a careless manner, so it be with plainness and clearness, and such as may tend to edification. Tho I have not in the following Book given such a particular relation of my Troubles, as perhaps the Readers may expect; yet I desire them to take notice, that where ever I speak of inward distress, as by a third person I there speak what I myself have felt. It is an observation of the Readers of St. Cyprian, that through all his Writings almost every word doth breathe Martyrdom; his Expressions are full of spirit and passion, as if he had writ them
with

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with his blood, and conveyed the anguish of his sufferings into his Writings: If I had had the judgment and the Pen of so Eloquent a person, I might have much better described the sadness of my case; but I am sure nothing in the world could fully express it, it was so very terrible, and the greatness of the danger does heighten the mercy of God my deliverer, to whose Grace and wonderful Salvation I owe my present peace and hope, to whom I will devote all my poor endeavours. That those which I have used in the following Treatise may be serviceable to his Glory, your advantage, and the relief of your Melancholly Friends, and many others, as also to my own good, is the prayer of

Your Hearty Adviser,

London, Sept.
10. 1691.

TIMOTHY ROGERS.

The

*The LETTERS that were sent from
several Divines to the Author, are
these following.*

LETTER I.

From Matching-Hall in Essex, Nov. 21. 1690.

.

 Sir, I took the first opportunity to read your good Book; and besides the many useful things which are there to be learned in detail, the general scope and occasion of it did much affect me, partly with gratitude, partly with an awful fear, with the former, to consider, how it might have been with me; with the latter, considering how it may be with me; I see in what others suffer, what I might have suffered; and what am I that God should exempt me from the lot of others better than myself? It is likely now it is over, you may have cause to say, That all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth; and the comforts that you have in the return of the morning after a night, like theirs that live under the Poles, may more than recompence all your sorrows and pains. And God hath thereby fitted you to support
and

and comfort others from your own experience; yet it is a favour to be freed from such pains and terrors. *Those that go down to the Sea in Ships, and do business in great waters, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep;* but when he commandeth and raiseth up the stormy wind, which lifteth up *the waves thereof, they mount up to Heaven, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble, and they are at their wits end;* so that many would be afraid to purchase their experience so dear, or to venture to Sea in a storm, tho they might with pleasure relate their adventures, when the danger is over. Some have a smooth and even way through the world, while others are like those that go over *Salisbury Plain*, or some such place, where they have sometimes a clear prospect of the City, and their way to it, when they get upon the high ground; but when they are down in a valley, quite lose the sight of it, and may fear they shall never find the way to it: Some by a *fiducia perfugii*, keep on a fair and softly pace towards Heaven, and never have any experience, either of the ravishing joys, or amazing terrors of others, who are sometimes lift up to Heaven in ravishing comforts, and sometimes cast down to Hell with fears and terrors. But tho, through the mercy of God, I have had a safe and easie passage hitherto through the world, I know not what storms I may meet with before I get into harbor. I remember that great man *Mr. Marshal*, (of whom we were lately speaking) told me not long before he died, That through the mercy of God he had much peace and quietness in his
own

own mind, tho he was not acquainted with the ravishing joys which others felt, but knew not how it would be with him before he came to die, he did depend upon God, and was at his mercy not only for his Salvation, but for the comfort and assurance of it. Many charge the Doctrine of Assurance and Perseverance, as tending to licentiousness, and emboldening men to sin; but if there were nothing else to be said in the case, those terrors which they who are sure to go to Heaven, may here fall under, are sufficient to check mens boldness and presumption; if I were sure that what I eat would not presently kill me, yet if I knew that it would most likely breed the Gout, or the Stone, I should forbear it. Tho God may not send us to Hell, he may bring Hell to us, and make us feel the anticipations of it in our Consciences; *who knows the power of his wrath?* Or who can endure his terrors, if he run upon us like a Giant, take us by the neck, and shake us to pieces! We have need to pray, that *he may not be a terror to us in the day of evil*; we are always at his mercy, and depend upon him for the comfort and evidence of Grace, as well as for the habit and exercise of it. *If he give quietness, none can cause trouble; but if he hide his face, who can behold him!* I have sometime been on a mountain in the skirts of the *Alpes*, when one while we have had the Sun shining out clear, and presently a Cloud hath come, and we have been as in a thick mist, and could not see a step before us. God when he pleases, can hold us as over the bottomless pit, as some will hold Children over some dangerous place

place to affright them ; he can keep our minds intent upon our sin , so as it shall be ever before us ; he can suffer our judgments to be so clouded, that we shall have such dark apprehensions of things, as to look upon those evidences which we have stored up against an evil day, as self-deceivings and delusions ; he can let Satan loose upon us to dispute us out of all our hopes ; he can make our hearts soft, so as our fears and troubles shall make a sensible impression upon us , and be as an heavy burden upon a galled back. He can bring our souls to the grave, and our lives to the destroyers, setting us upon the very borders of Eternity, so as we cannot relieve our selves, by putting far from us the evil day. And thus he deals sometimes with such as are to him as the apple of his eye ; he uses his Sovereignty in distributing both comforts and terrors ; but an humble submission and resignation of our selves to his good will and pleasure, will be the best means to prevent such storms, or at least the best posture for them to find us in. I am

Your Real Friend

Hen. Lukin.

LETTER II.

From *Sissafernes* in *Hartfordshire*, Nov. 4. 1690.

Dear Sir,

I Have Read your *Practical Treatise upon Sickness and Recovery*, which you have lately published to the World, and am glad to find so Universal and deep a sense of the goodness of God, manifested in your own wonderful and late return to the Ministry, as is exprest in those Lines, which I take as a real Copy, transcribed from the Original in your inward Parts. I hope Grace, Mercy, and Truth, will keep you, and preserve alive those sparks of Zeal in your Soul, to fly always upwards to God, which have been kindled by him. If the Lord shines forth more clearly and influentially upon you after so black a Cloud, I question not but the Light of His Countenance will make amends for the Darkness you lay under. The most violent Storms can never beat off the Loving-kindness of the Lord from *One* of his, tho' sometimes, in the deep Waters, all hopes of being saved may be taken away by them. Blessed be the Lord, that threw out a Plank to save you in a time of need, and secured you comfortably upon dry Land, when you thought of nothing but of being Shipwrack'd, and swallowed up in the deepest Mire. You have found a Rock, when you fear'd a Gulf; and may stand upon one that is higher than you, when you had been

been carried so near unto the Land of forgetfulness, that God seemed to be just a laying you in the lowest Pit, in Darknes, in the Deeps, with his Wrath lying hard upon you, and afflicting you with all his Waves. Doubtless God hath thus cloathed you with the Garment of Salvation, that you may encourage others to put on Christ, tho Hell be naked before them, and destruction hath no covering from those that are not hid in him. God hath emptied you of your own Fulness, that you may be filled with *Him that filleth all in all*. You have been taught, even under Judgment, to sing of Mercy; and in every part of Salvation, to cry, *Grace, Grace*, unto it; having seen that his Grace is sufficient for you. He hath given you a Sip of Wrath, that the Cup of your Consolation may drink the sweeter, and that you may tast the more, how good the Lord is, that would not leave you to take up the Full Draught, or wring out the Dregs in your Cup of Bitterness and Astonishment to all Eternity. I desire to adore the Divine Goodness on your behalf, that he hath visited you with his own Presence, tho he had *his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm*, when he came unto you. I bless the unsearchable Riches of his Grace in our Lord Jesus Christ, that he hath shed abroad a sense of his Love upon your Soul, who had poured so much of his displeasure forth, that you complain of his Anger in every stroke of the Rod of God upon you. I rejoyce abundantly that he hath bowed his ear unto Prayer for you, when you thought he had bent his Bow like an Enemy; that he hath botled

botled up your Tears, when your Roarings were poured forth like the Waters; that God hath form'd you into a Vessel of Mercy, when you thought he had slung you away as a Vessel wherein is no Pleasure. In a word, I rejoyce with comfort and enlargements, that the Lord hath given us so good hopes through Grace, that you are Sealed up unto the Day of Redemption, who did once mournfully express it in my own Hearing, That you were Sealed up unto the Black Day of Wrath, and should not see me until the Heavens were no more. No more at present, but my Hearty Requests at the Throne of Grace, That He, who hath been the Author of your Faith, may become the finisher of the same, and confirm you unto the End, till an Abundant Entrance (through the Broad Gate of Assurance) be administred unto you into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am,

S I R,

Your Affectionate Friend,

Servant, and Brother in the Lord,

J. HUSSEY.

L E T.

LETTER III.

Dear Brother,

AS the tidings of your Distemper affected my Soul, and drew out my heart to make request unto God for you; so the tidings of your deliverance from trouble, confirmed by so evident a demonstration of it as your appearance both in the Pulpit and Press, hath much affected me with joy and thankfulness to the Lord. In your Book I read the Wisdom and Goodness of God in his severest dealings with his afflicted Servants, and the accomplishing of what *Job* speaks, *That when he hath tried them, he brings them forth as gold*; you have not been in the Furnace in vain; but to humble and prove you, and do you good in the end: O how good is God! good in himself, good and kind to all his Creatures, but especially good to *Israel*. You have had abundant experience of it; he hath upheld you when falling, and raised you up when you was bowed down; and *hath turned for you your mourning into dancing; hath put off your sackcloth, and girded you with gladness, that your soul may sing praise unto him, and not be silent*; and you have well done in making so publick an acknowledgement of your thankfulness to God; that as deliverance hath been granted at the request of many, so by the many who have been concerned for you, thanks may be given unto the Lord on your behalf. I am persuaded the Lord hath taught you the truth

of that, (*viz.*) *That the School of the Cross is the School of Light.* You had not known so well, either your own vanity, or the Vanity of the Creature, and of all humane help; nor the marvellous loving-kindness of the Lord in stepping in betwixt the Bridge and the Water many times for your help, had you not learned these things by being in the School of Affliction; and I am encouraged to believe, that the Lord hath reserved you, and restored you, that you may be, through his Grace, greatly instrumental for the glory of his Name, in turning many to righteousness; the most eminent Servants in the Lord's work have been prepared for it by manifold temptations; our *Blessed Redeemer himself was tempted, that he might be able to succour those who are tempted; and the Lord comforts his Servants in all their tribulations, that they might comfort others with the same comfort wherewith they have been comforted of God;* the Lord hath brought you out of the depths of distress, that you may be the more skilful Pilot to lead others through the Waves and Billows which they are afraid will swallow them up. Now, Dear Brother, What doth the Lord require of you, but what Paul sets before young Timothy? 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be you an example to Believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, your sound speech, holy converse, fervent love, and spiritual mindedness; rightly improving spiritual Gifts, both in sincere professing and publishing of the truth; and unspotted purity of life, will be a speaking Rule to others, and so adorn both your Person and Profession, that it will appear*
you

LETTER IV.

xliii

you have been with Jesus, and that the Life of Christ doth shine forth in you. And that you may be long a shining and burning Light in this World, and at last be abundantly recompensed with the Reward promised to the Wise and Faithful, is the fervent desire and prayer of

York, Nov. 6.
1690.

*Your Unworthy, but Affectionate
Brother in the service of
the Gospel,*

RALPH WARD.

LETTER IV.

From Steeple in Dorsetshire, May 1. 1691.

My Dear Friend,

I Did hope, when I was last in London, to have had the satisfaction of a free and large Conversation with your self; and to have discours'd some particular matters with you; but I was unhappily defeated. I am now at too great a distance to use so much freedom with you, as some of my Circumstances would prompt me to, if I were placed so near you, as would admit of my waiting on you personally. But tho I do not think it proper to desire satisfaction from you by Letter about some things, which would be of great use to my self, and about which I believe you can better resolve me than other of my Acquaintance; yet if it be

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of that, (*viz.*) *That the School of the Cross is the School of Light.* You had not known so well, either your own vanity, or the Vanity of the Creature, and of all humane help; nor the marvellous loving-kindness of the Lord in stepping in betwixt the Bridge and the Water many times for your help, had you not learned these things by being in the School of Affliction; and I am encouraged to believe, that the Lord hath reserved you, and restored you, that you may be, through his Grace, greatly instrumental for the glory of his Name, in turning many to righteousness; the most eminent Servants in the Lord's work have been prepared for it by manifold temptations; our *Blessed Redeemer himself was tempted, that he might be able to succour those who are tempted; and the Lord comforts his Servants in all their tribulations, that they might comfort others with the same comfort wherewith they have been comforted of God;* the Lord hath brought you out of the depths of distress, that you may be the more skilful Pilot to lead others through the Waves and Billows which they are afraid will swallow them up. Now, Dear Brother, What doth the Lord require of you, but what Paul sets before young Timothy? 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be you an example to Believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, your sound speech, holy converse, fervent love, and spiritual mindedness; rightly improving spiritual Gifts, both in sincere professing and publishing of the truth; and unspotted purity of life, will be a speaking Rule to others, and so adorn both your Person and Profession, that it will appear*

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consistent with your conveniences, I would be glad that you and I might maintain a correspondence sometimes by writing. I heartily bless God for his gracious dealings with you, and for the good, I hope, he hath done me, by what you have published to the World. I have found my self obliged frequently to peruse your Book; and the oftner I do read it, the more I am affected with it. I heartily wish, English People might become so sensible of their great concernment, that you might have encouragement to publish what you intimate in your Preface you did design: It is what I earnestly long to see, and what I am persuaded would be of singular use, if people were a little awakened out of their Lethargick Distemper. Peradventure God will use it to rouse and awaken many, who otherwise will sleep on, and continue in their doleful regardlessness and formality. It would greatly rejoice me to understand by a line or two from you, that I have some ground to hope to see that Tract in Print. The Lord preserve his faithful Messengers, and arm them against Discouragements. Remember *Eccles. 11. 1, & 6.* I am,

Your Affectionate Friend,

S A. B O L D,

LETTER

LETTER V.

Dear Mr. Rogers,

SIR, I thank you for your Discourses on Sickneſs and Recovery; I truſt, that God that hath given you (as it were) a reſurrection from the dead, hath deſigned you for more than ordinary work in your Generation. Your Deliverance and Salvation has been extraordinary; and 'tis more than probable, that ſo muſt your After-work be. God, who gives to his Servants the Talents of Gifts or Graces, will find imployment for them anſwerable unto the ſame. I long to ſee ſomething you hint in your Epistle before your Book, about your ſpiritual Conflict under your bodily Affliction; It will be, I hope, of uſe to all tender afflicted Conſciences. I have bleſſed the Lord on your behalf, for his ſignal favour ſhown you in your wonderful recovery. And ſhall pray to God for you, That he will pleaſe to continue your life, health, and opportunities to you, that you may be eminently uſeful in your Miniſterial Capacity for his Name. Your dear Parents would have rejoiced (if they had been alive) to have heard and ſeen the fruits of your Labours. Dear Sir, though I am a little ſtraitned for time at preſent, yet my heart is enlarged towards you; wiſhing you all health and happineſs in this World, and in the next, Eternal Felicity. I am,

*From Hudleſkeugh
in Cumberland,
Apr. 17. 1691.*

*Dear Sir,
Your unfeigned Well-wiſher
and Servant,*

GEO. NICHOLSON.
(c 4) LET-

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir,

IT was your signal happiness to be deeply writ upon the hearts of many of God's praying Servants, when in your own apprehension you seemed as if you had been cast out of God's heart: And I heard some, when you were at your lowest ebb, express their faith and hope, That God was but preparing you by those afflictive Methods for more eminent Service. And now it cannot but greatly rejoice me, to see such blooming appearances of the Issue answering both their Prayers and Hopes. Ministers, of all Persons, had need to set up upon a good stock of Experience, spiritual and useful Experience! And no School more proper to improve us in that kind, than the School of Affliction; which made *Luther* sometimes say, That *Affliction, Temptation and Prayer, were the three Things that made a Minister*. And hence it is, that God in his wise and holy Providence, many times puts his Servants to School under the preparatory Pedagogy of Affliction, whom he designs for more than ordinary usefulness. When we enter upon the service of Souls, we know not what Cases may occur, to require our wise and tender management: And a *Scribe* cannot be better instructed for the Kingdom of God, than when he has felt in himself what he meets with in others. When we have been brought to the mouth of the Pit our selves, and there have been

been conscious to the thoughts and fears, and workings of our own hearts, we can better tell how to minister proper applications to others in the like condition. When we have our selves been toss'd upon the tumultuous waves of temptation, and *one deep has call'd to another*, to put the greatest discouragement upon our condition, we are the better furnish'd to speak a word in season to others under the like circumstances. Every Storm weathered, furnishes the Pilot with more dextrous skill, not only to work his own Vessel in succeeding Tempests, but to be singularly helpful to others, when they fall into the like depths and Straits. *Our Blessed Lord himself learned experience by the things which he suffered* : And if he must be put to School to lead him into a practical experience of what he was to pity and help in others ; How much more is it requisite in such poor unskilful Creatures as we ! A Wise and Holy God has been hewing you upon the dark Mountains ; and I hope it has been to make you a more expert and polite Pillar in his Sanctuary : And the more workmanship he has bestowed upon you, the more eminent Station probably he designs for you. God works his greatest works many times in the dark, and forms his most curious Pieces in the gloomy shades of Adversity ; so that neither our selves, nor others, can tell what he is a-doing, till he hath accomplish'd his Work. He throws us into the Furnace, Lead or Iron, and for a long time no body can tell what he will make of us : Sometimes he looks as if he would consume, and make an utter end of us :
And

LETTER VI.

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And

And yet at last he brings us forth as Gold. We go into the Fire light, and foolish, and frothy; and when he has melted and tried us, what time he sees meet, he brings us forth serious, holy and gracious Souls. When we thought we should have lost Life, and Soul, and All, we have lost nothing but our dross and feculency, to make us more refined for Temple-service. When you seriously reflect upon your by-past days of trouble, whatever thoughts you had then, yet, I hope, now you can say through grace, that God has made you no loser, but a blessed gainer by that gloomy dispensation. And what wisdom, and grace, and experience you have obtained, I pray God you may be helped humbly to imploy in his Holy Sanctuary. We should labour to diffuse a more shining and burning Light, when God has been trimming us from our dross and filth, and has set us up again in his Temple-Candlestick. God has been dressing and trimming you a long time; and after a long and dismal time of complicated affliction, he has restored you to your station in the Assemblies of his People: Now the good Lord make both your gifts and graces so much the more resplendent, not only for your own sake, but also that you may minister the more light and warmth to others in their way to glory. You promise a Second Volume of Discourses, giving account of the spiritual part of your Affliction, which I shall be very glad to see, as soon as your leisure will permit you to make it publick. In the mean time I commend you to God, and to the riches of his Grace, in
hopes

hopes that what God has done for you, is but a pledge of what he designs to do by you. To which I shall only add my earnest Prayers, and tell you, That it is in all sincerity.

S I R,

Leeds, Nov. 25.
1690.

*Your affectionate Fellow-labourer
in the Work of the Gospel,*

THO. WHITAKER.

L E T T E R VII.

S I R,

I Do now at last return you my hearty thanks for your Book ;

I should not have been thus far behind in expressing my gratitude, but that I have been hindered by weakness :

It was a Book to me both seasonable and suitable ; I pray God it may be as well improv'd, as 'tis generally liked by Christians. If I were to give an account of my Visitation, it would in very many things correspond with yours. I have been for some years past under an Hypochondriacal evil habit of body, which has had many grievous Symptoms attending it ; viz. Vertigo's, Convulsions, Paralytick Effects, with a Fever, thought to be Hectical ; and with

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it I have had an universal languor and decay of Spirits ; together with dreadful Temptations, Clouds , Confusions and Terrors of Soul, &c. so that there was no hope, or help to be expected, but from Heaven, in answer to many Prayers, which (through mercy) were successful ;

. . . though still I am under weakness ; though I hope rather going forward, than contrary. As to my Soul, I have not been without good experiences (blessed be the free Grace of God !) I cannot, neither may I trouble you, to enlarge upon any of these things. My old Enemy will not lay down but by force ; strong Temptations and Corruptions, &c. are my daily Exercise : Good Sir, help me by your Prayers over to the Lord Jesus ; there's as much in that, as if I had made more words ; Pray Sir, forget me not, and please to put others in remembrance of me ; you know what Graces are necessary to such a Condition. 'Tis a true saying, *Tranquillus Deus, tranquillat omnia* ; the Lord teach me to be as humble as he would have me be ; and in every thing give thanks. I desire to rejoice with you, and them that rejoice concerning you, for your restoration. Good Sir, again remember them that are still out in the storm ; such have need of patience, &c. I know not how to break off. But time and strength failing me, I remain,

Daventry,
March 10.
1691.

S I R,
Your Friend and Servant,
Joh. Worth, Jun.

LETTER VIII.

From a Young Student in Divinity.

Dear and much respected Cousin,

Long Experience proves it, beyond a thousand Arguments, that they who have made choice of God for their happiness, must expect none here; 'tis a contradiction to expect Heaven on Earth, or to look for a settled duration where all things rush round in vicissitude. I cannot tell what they may find who have the world at will; but I am sure Believers, upon a reflection and consideration of the hard usage, and unquieting perplexities which they are still meeting with, cannot but long to be where the weary are at rest. The Saints who have now got to the end of their way, may well rejoice, for they have good reason for it: happy are they who have got safely to their Father's House through so many threatening Difficulties. When others are lawless as to their practices, we are limited to the holy Rule of the Word; our life must be a life of Self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the World. I know not what thoughts many Professors may have of Religion; but for my self, when I seriously think what a life a true Christian's is, I am ready to cry out, True Religion is a rare thing! Dear Cousin, What manner of men should you and I be, who are designed for such special work! I desire to bear part in the praises for your wonderful Deliverance;

L E T T E R VIII.

liverance; the Lord teach us the true nature of Thankfulness, that we may live more to, and for God.

. . . I desire an interest in your Prayers, that God would keep me from Melancholly, which I am inclined to; and that God would bless my study to me, and make it successful; and in so doing, you will add one more to the Favours you have bestow'd on

Rauthmell in
Yorkshire, No-
vemb. 17. 1690.

Your very Loving Cousin,

THO. BARNES.

L E T T E R IX.

To a Relation of the Author's who was long under Melancholly, from a Minister who several years was under that Disease.

My dear Christian Friend,

AS Christ has given me any bowels of mercy, I cannot but pity you under your Soul-affliction, and disquietment of spirit, being greatly oppressed by Satan, that malicious and active Spirit, who hates you for the Truth's sake; and (no doubt) therefore hates you, because he finds in you the love of the truth, by the proper and convincing evidences of it; And that you might not have any comfort by it, as
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the work of the Spirit of Grace in your heart, as also that God might not have from you the praise and glory due unto his Grace for it, (for he envies him all the worship and glory that's given him by his Saints in Heaven and Earth.) Therefore he does all he can to hide the knowledge of it from you, by clouding your mind, by darkning your evidences by his own malicious suggestions against you, as also by stirring up all sorts of sin in you, but more especially Unbelief, the sin of sins, his First-born, the Mother of all Abominations in the Soul, and so the Provocative; whereby, he well knows, if he can work it up to its perfect and full dominion, he shall effectually hinder the income of all peace and joy, and so fill the poor despairing Soul with all heaviness and horror, never to be removed but by faith, and its actings on Jesus Christ, the King of Righteousness, and the King of Peace. I beseech you therefore (Dear Sister, and the Lord himself work it in you!) turn away your mind from all the malicious, deceitful, lying Suggestions of the Adversary, whom you know, by the Scripture of Truth, to be *a Lyar and a Murderer from the beginning*; and will do all that he can to beguile you of the Grace of God in you, as also of all that mercy, pardon and peace, which God has provided in his Son, for all believing, broken-hearted Sinners, such as (I doubt not) you are, whatever you may seem to your self in your present darkness, and hour of temptation. Turn your self (yea the Lord do it for you, and in you;) from him, to your Saviour, who will not accuse

cuse you with the Father, as he does; but is pleading his sufferings, and presenting his Blood and Atonement made thereby, for you: Look to him (dear Sister) look to him, whom you shall find to be as the true Brazen Serpent to your love-sick Soul, which has been sore wounded by that fiery-flying Serpent, and old Dragon; but your Lord has overcome him by death, and you also (I doubt not) have overcome him in divers Combats and Temptations already, and shall overcome him fully and finally by the Faith of your mighty Redeemer, and the Captain of your Salvation; who, as he is able to save you to the utmost, so I doubt not, he will do it, whatever your Doubts and Fears may be at present. He is with you, taking care of your Soul, and all its Concerns, though your eyes are withheld, that you cannot discern him, as it was sometimes with the Apostles themselves; but he will ere long manifest himself to you, and then you shall know and acknowledge also, That he has born with you, and will be with you for ever; even as I now do, though I were as much to seek for his gracious presence with me, as you are, or can well be. The Lord himself, even our Lord Jesus Christ, work this very thing in you, and cause you to hold fast your confidence firm unto the end; and you shall find, that it has great recompence of reward, as the Apostles has testified to the *Hebrews*; For he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry: He will not only come to Judgment at the last day; but he will come to you in the Spirit, and judge for your

LETTER I.

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your Soul against your Enemies, to deliver you from all, even Sin (which is such a burthen to you;) As also from Satan, the great Troubler of your peace, who does either accuse you falsely, or aggravates all your Infirmities and Miscarriages, though such as he has tempted you to, above all reason. I shall be glad to have some account from you, how it is with your Soul;

I shall endeavour (what lies in me, as enabled by the Spirit of Christ) to be a helper to your faith and joy.

I shall add no more at this time, but only to let you know, That I have you, and others in your condition, daily in my prayers; so I commend you to the mercy of God in our dear Redeemer, I am,

*Your very affectionate Friend,
and Brother in Christ,*

Febr. 21.

1688.

GEORGE PORTER.

LETTER II.

*Written to a Relation of the Author's, by
one that had been under Melancholly.*

Mrs. Rogers,

IF you dare believe one that hath been in your Case (which I confess is very sad, and much to be pitied) you have very much of a
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Bodily distemper, and tho, by reason of your Clouds, you cannot hope for relief, either by spiritual or natural means; yet know, that nothing is too hard for God to do; use both, and look up to God, as well as you can, for a Blessing: *The Lord's arm is not shortened that he cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that he cannot hear.* And tho your Sins, and sad Apprehensions, keep you in sadness, that you cannot see the Lord Jesus, nor call him yours, yet he sees you bemoaning your Misery and Disability to love and serve him. I know you would give all the World, were it at your disposal, for a glimpse of this favour. Do not side with your Enemy so far, as to believe that you would not accept of the Lord Jesus to be your King, as willingly as to be your Saviour; If you can get so much ground of your self, then judge you are not alone in this, for those that have been in deep Melancholly, have not only had hard thoughts of themselves, but hard and sinful thoughts of God, as if he delighted in the death of a Sinner (although he hath sworn the contrary.) In that dismal condition they could not see the loveliness of Christ, nor hardly discern desires after him, unless only to be saved from Hell; they could plead against themselves, That their Day of Grace was past, and that they had sinned the unpardonable sin, and that for several years. Much more I could say, but I know it is to no purpose, none can speak to the heart, but God alone; only I beg of you to cherish that hope you have, which the Devil would have you disown; but had you none, you would

not ask any to pray for you. I knew one that was in so despairing a Condition that did not that; nor believed it more possible to be saved, than the Devil: At length was persuaded to use a Steel Course, and Drink the Waters, and other means, which, by God's Blessing, did good; and as the bodily distemper wore off, more clearness came into the Mind, and hope returned, which before seemed to be quite dead; and tho the Party still hath Clouds, . . . and Satan is apt to put in, that all is naught still, through God's Mercy, the poor creature can reply, I am changeable in my frame, God is unchangeable in his Covenants. Tho I cannot find the sensible joy, nor love, nor delight that I would; yet blessed be God that he enables me to wait on him, in the use of the means, by which he hath promised to renew my strength; and tho I want that sweet sensible Communion with God, which is the Life of Heaven, Is it not a Mercy that I can hope in his Mercy? Have I deserved such high favours, that I must be always full of Joy! This is what I would; but if the Lord will keep me a poor Beggar, 'tis infinite Mercy that I am not in Hell; and that the desire of my heart is after him, I chuse to love him, I cast my self on him, I neither expect nor desire any other Saviour; if I perish, it shall be in serving him as well as I can, and let him do his will: *There is forgiveness with him, that he should be feared.* This poor Creature often thinks of that Scripture, when Christ spoke to Thomas, *Thou seest and believest,*

L E T T E R II.

lievest, *blissed are they that do not see, yet believe.* You say this is no Comfort to you, it is not your Case; true, but you know not how soon it may be: This Party that I speak of, was in your Case, and I verily believe in worse; therefore, pray cast not off your confidence, the Lord I verily hope will shew you Mercy: But you must wait; be not impatient; Is not Redemption from Hell, and hope of Heaven worth waiting for?

The Lord shine in upon your Soul, and let you see, that whatever he doth is in love and faithfulness. Pray for me, that I may not forget how it hath been with, nor be insensible of your Condition, or others in your case.

I am in some small manner sensible of your trouble, I wish I were abundantly more so; for then I should hope to be hereafter, a partaker with you in your Joys.

July 24. 89.

L E T T E R III.

To a Relation of the Author's.

MY very kind, and dear Friend, whom I much respect and love in the Lord, even as I have Cause; having found you to be one, who (I am persuaded) Love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; which you have fully manifested by your longings after him, and your great inward sorrow, when you could not enjoy him as you would: And now he is returned unto you,

you; your soul is at rest, rejoycing in him, as the Lord your Righteousness, Peace, and Life, in whom you have all your soul needs and desires. And the Lord manifest himself to you more and more, and fill you with abundance of Peace and Joy in Believing; which (I doubt not) you desire for this end, That his Joy being your Strength, and your Heart enlarged by it, you may be able to run the ways of his Commandments, and to serve him not only in sincerity, but with all gladness, in all love and thankfulness, for all his loving-kindness, and all the great things he has done for your soul, in bringing it out of that horrible pit of darkness, and the shadow of death, wherein you saw neither Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars, but were afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; without all light, comfort and joy; tho the Father of Lights, and the God of all Consolation were with you, when you perceived him not, and could discover no tokens of his Gracious Presence, as neither could I, in the like gloomy Condition: But I now find, as you also do, blessed be the Father of Mercies, That he was ready at hand, to give forth Light and Joy, when his own set time came; which tho we did not wait for in a due manner, by Faith, Patience, and Humility, yet he passed by all our unbelief, impatience, and peevishness, and visited our sinful Souls, in his tender Mercy, notwithstanding all whereby we had provoked him, to turn his short withdrawing from us, into an everlasting departure from us, and have left us wholly to the unbe-

LETTER IV.

lief and frowardness of our own evil hearts: Wherefore, let us magnify his Name together, and let his high praises be in our hearts and mouths as long as we live, and unto all Eternity; for he is most worthy to be praised: And blessed be his Name for ever and ever, *Amen*. And let us walk circumspectly and humbly with him all our days, that we grieve not his good Spirit any more, and provoke him to withdraw from us, and to take his blessed influences and comforts from us, as he has done. He is the life of our souls, and the joy of our hearts; without him, we are but a sink of all filth, and a hell of sorrow and confusion.

I hope you will give me the contentment, to let me see you as oft as you can; I shall be glad to be a means to help forward your Faith and Joy, unto a more full settlement of Spirit, and more abundant rejoycing in the Lord Jesus: Thus, with my constant Prayers for you, I commend you to the Grace of God, in Christ, and Rest

London,
Febr. 8.
1689.

*Your most Affectionate Friend
and Brother in the Lord,*

GEORGE PORTER.

LETTER IV.

To a Relation of the Authors.

Mrs. Rogers,

I Have read your doleful Letter, wherein you express your distress of mind under which you lately labour'd; 'twas indeed a very sad mis-

misapprehension of God, and of your own condition; but yet this is no more than what hath befallen many a dear Servant of God, who have managed the same Objection against themselves, and have labour'd under the same affrightments. This you counterballance with the comfortable account you give of God's great Mercy to you in commanding down these waves and storms: I rejoice with you in this, and pray that God would please to confirm and settle you in the sense of his Love. And that you may go forward in your present peaceable Estate, I would advise you to take a due care of your Body, and to reduce it into order; I know well you are naturally melancholly, and you may be assured the Devil took no small advantage from thence, to raise up your distressing fears; and if you take not heed, to take away this advantage, he may (except God wonderfully prevent) raise up trouble to you a second time: 'Tis not possible for me at so great a distance to direct you in this matter; Physicians upon the place that see you, and can occasionally fit or change their prescriptions, are only fit to advise you. This being cared for, I shall only put you in mind of a few things, which I would have you to establish upon your mind; and these are such as a review of your apprehensions in your former trouble will help you to understand. First then, Call to mind that such dreadful Terrors as you have had, are not to be understood as certain evidences of God's rejecting those that are so afflicted; tho' you so concluded against your self, yet the present peace which God in great mercy hath given

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you

you, is enough to tell you, that you were mistaken when you thought so. *Heman's Case*, and the instances of many others of your own Acquaintance, may abundantly satisfy you, that these things may befall the precious Servants of God. Secondly, Note also, That a true converted Person may be brought to that pass, as to deny all the Evidences of Grace which he formerly had, and may condemn himself for an Hypocrite, when at the same time these Evidences appear to By-standers, and shine through the black Cloud of their terror. Thirdly, 'Tis further to be noted, that the sad Speeches such Men utter, and the desperate conclusions that such do make, are little else than the Discourses of those that are distracted; nor will God rigidly press them upon us, as sins of that nature which we would take them to be. God, in Mercy, considers our distress, and will more gently pass by such extravagancies, than we can readily believe. 4. You should also call to mind, that you and others in this Case, boldly venture to determine that, which neither you nor no Man else can know; as that you were cut off, reprobated, made to be destroyed, no time of Mercy left, &c. This was a conclusion which you had no warrant to make, nor could you prove it: If you concluded your present state to be bad, you should not have taken upon you to pronounce God's purpose to have been against you for the future; Who knows the Mind of God? 5. I also think that you might possibly have some disadvantage, by some darkness of mind, about the nature of Faith; some expressions in your Letter (where you complain

plain you could not believe) look as if you thought Faith must be a believing that our sins are pardoned; I will not much insist on this, because I may mistake: But if you had such a mistake in your mind, 'tis no wonder to say you could not believe. These things you may do well to consider as mistakes, which the disordered Reason you had, run upon, to the increase of your trouble; and now, while you are in the calm, fix the contrary upon your mind, and come up as fully as you can to these following conclusions. 1. Let the amiable, lovely, and compassionate Nature of God be deeply impressed upon your mind; think often, seriously meditate, *That God is Love, That he delights not in the death of sinners*; That he is willing to save. 2. Make much of the probability, or even possibility of Salvation, even when the assurance of Faith is wanting; 'tis a great stay, to be able to nourish hope concerning this thing. 3. Persuade your self for certain, *That God's Decree is no rule for you to go by*; and that you must interpret his Decree by his Promises; for it's certain his Decree doth not contradict his Promise. 4. Assure your self, that if God sincerely incline your heart to accept of Christ as your Righteousness and Lawgiver, and endeavour faithfully to live accordingly, he will undoubtedly fulfil his Promise of Peace and Pardon to you; and that it is a comfortable evidence of his special Grace. 5. Do not think you want Faith, because you have not assurance; *Faith is such a belief of the proffer of Salvation by Christ in the Gospel, as makes us willing to accept it upon God's terms*. 6. Listen not to severe and malignant

lignant suggestions of Satan against the Mercifulness and Goodness of God; if any such thoughts come into your mind, cast them out presently, and raise up your mind unto a detestation of them. 7. Be thankfully content with that measure of Peace which God hath given you, expect not more than you ought, but patiently wait, in holy walking, and dependance upon God, till he enlarge you with Joy and Peace in believing; 'tis a mercy that he allows us peaceable encouraging hopes; all must not expect to be treated in his Banqueting-house, with his Banner of Love over them. 8. Live watchfully; Lament daily failings, and so make up Peace with God daily; expect at best, you will have cause of complaint against your self, but still consider God's merciful Promise to Pardon; and that for common infirmities, he will not be severe, nor should we affright our selves with them; consider these few things, and endeavour to settle your mind upon them; God that hath brought you up out of the horrible Pit, will, I hope, preserve you from the like distress. I am glad to hear your Brother is grown better; in time he may be capable to do Service, which I earnestly desire, and shall pray for. I am

Newcastle,
Jan. 28. 89.

Your assured Friend,

RICH. GILPIN.

LETTER V.

Written to another Relation of the Author's by an Old and Experienced Christian.

My dear Friend,

I Would not have difference in Opinion, or alterations in worldly Conditions, to breed a distance between us; The Lord pardon us, for we are apt to grow cold in love. And, O that the ancient Spirit of Love among Christians might be revived, which would more honour Christ, than all our Conformity, or Non-conformity! For the Kingdom of Christ, and the glory of Christianity, lies not in Forms and Opinions, but in Power, and Holiness, and Righteousness, and Joy of the Holy Ghost, and love to one another.

I have been under *deep Melancholly*, and many Temptations, and Buffetings of Satan, and many have passed by me, as the *Levite* did the wounded Man in the way to *Jericho*, and have not only withdrawn from me, but censured me also. I hope I shall love and pardon all those who in the hour of temptation withdrew from me, and stood afar off, because of my sorrow; nay those, who added affliction to my affliction. It were a shame for me to complain of any unkindness of my Friends, when Christ hath been so kind to me; he helped, succoured me, stood by me, when all forsook me; I looked on my right hand, and on my left hand, and there
was

was none that cared for my Soul ; even then did the Lord appear a present help , else the great waters of Unbelief and Despair had overwhelmed me ; for I have had greater Conflicts with Satan , greater shakings of Spirit than I had at my first Conversion. I have been ready to give up all for lost ; yet all hath been in order to clearer manifestations of Everlasting Love ; Christ hath carried me through several Graves , several Chambers of Darkness , and Fields of Temptation , yet all in order to light and triumph , and greater discoveries of his Power , Wisdom , Faithfulness , Love to me ; I have exceedingly put Christ to it , as much as ever any ; I would not believe , unless I might put my Finger in his Wounds ; unless I had such and such clear manifestations and sealings given him. O this unbelieving and proud temper of spirit hath cost me very dear ; though Christ hath wonderfully indulged me , I have put him to take strange courses with me ; nay , to throw me with *Jonas* into the Belly of the Whale , and of Hell it self , that he might further convince me of my disobedience and unbelief , and of his mighty glorious power , in preserving and delivering me out of the gulph of Temptations. He hath shewed many Miracles of mercy and grace towards me , too big for me to express. Heaven only is fit sufficiently to declare those wonderful dealings of his. If ever any was a pattern of rich grace , I am. You never so grieved , and wounded , and tempted Christ , as I have done ; and therefore never was cast into those Hells , scorched in those Fires ,
scourged

scourged with those Rods, exercised with those Temptations, that I have been exercised with. I cannot tell what God hath been doing to me. As the Heavens are high above the Earth, so are his thoughts above all my thoughts, or words. Sure I am, I should have been in Hell, and in Chains of darkness, if I had had my desert. But God hath stretched out his Arm of power and love, and fetched me up out of the lowest Pit, where I was sunk, and displayed the banners of his Love over me, and opened his heart, and shewed me his Blood. That thus he should deal with me, the very worst piece of old Adam; nay, a piece of Hell, Angels and Men may stand amazed at; so great, and so unexpected were the manifestations of his Love. But what shall I say, It is Christ, it is Christ, an Infinite Person; 'tis impossible for any other (Men or Angels all put together) to contain such his Love; such strange Love, to such an unworthy Wretch! I write and speak what I do not fully comprehend: If I did fully know it, Mortality could not bear it; it would immediately be swallowed up, and sink under the weight of Infinite Love. Ah, but dear Friend, I am not yet out of Gunshot, I see a great Field of Enemies before me; a Devil full of Policy and Malice, a desperate wicked World, a Heart, in which is a World of evil, nay an Hell of Wickedness; all these I have to grapple with, each of them stands armed with thousands of Temptations; I must fight, and overcome too, else undone for ever. I confess it is a good Fight, a glorious Fight,

Fight, because I have such a good Captain; but often I am sorely put to it; when I take a view of my Enemies, I think I shall never be able to stand against such Principalities and Powers. The Enemy hath too dangerous Correspondence within me; Spiritual Pride and Security, Lord keep me humble and watchful, and eying the Enemy, and also eying my Captain. Living out of my self, and fighting in his strength, and then my Soul shall tread down Strength daily, and triumph always in Christ, and in the power of his might.

I hear the Lord is pleased to keep you under the Rod, and to exercise you with the Infirmities of a dying body, as he doth me; He hath worn (as I may say) his Rods upon me, as a stubborn Child. He hath tried his Axes, and Hammers, and Saws upon me; you cannot imagine what a Rock I am under all his strokes. I hope Afflictions work more kindly with you than they do with me; and that you are found better metal in the fire than I am. I hear you are under Melancholly as well as I, though not in so great a degree. Satan can make use of it to raise strange storms and tempests, and confusions and darkneses in the Soul, as I have found by experience, though Christ turned all to good. Such Melancholly Persons had need be pitied, and tendred; Men usually do not pity them, Christ will. I could tell you many experiences of a Melancholly Condition, but the time fails me. Let us lift up our heads in faith and patience, our Redemption draweth near; shortly we shall be out of the reach of Satan,

LETTER VI.

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Satan, Sin, Melancholly, Sicknefs, &c. we have a *Jordan* to go over, but the Ark goes before us; it shall be made passable. Christ will take us by the hand, and bring us through to the other side. I mention you daily in my prayers, do you the like. I am

*Yours in Christ; your Fellow-
soldier, and Sufferer,*

T. L.

LETTER VI.

Sent to a Relation of the Author's.

Christian Friend,

THE Lord hath made me so sensible of your disconsolate Condition, that you are seldom out of my thoughts, and frequent remembrances in my Prayers, that God would give you comfort and peace in believing, which he can convey by what instrument he pleaseth. We read in *Job 33. 23, 24.* *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.* Elibu in these words makes a defence for God's proceedings with man; where he shews, it is not man's Ruine that God desires by his various methods; he speaks in dreams, and by afflictions; and he sends a Messenger sometimes with the affliction, to shew unto a man his uprightness. I hope
God

God hath no design to manifest his wrath to you, but to give you evidences of your sincerity; for if you did not love God, you would not lament for his absence as you do. Supposing that your delays in opening to Christ have caused him to depart from you, never to return more; if you had rejected the good motions of the Spirit, it appears by your sorrow, that it was not out of malice, nor no other fault, but what the Spouse was guilty of: If he should cast off every one that does not always readily obey his call, he would not manifest so great willingness to receive all those that come to him: You may be, and I doubt not but you are mistaken in your Condition, as Mrs. *Honnywood* was, whom God convinced by a Miracle. *Peter*, tho he denied his Lord, and forswore him, yet he manifested himself first to him, rather than to any of the other Disciples, and took care that he should have the first news of his Resurrection. Christ is a merciful and faithful High-Priest; he considers our Infirmities; he is full of bowels of Compassion, and came to seek and save that which was lost. Give no credit to Satan, who would make you believe that God is not willing to be reconciled, who sends Ambassadors on purpose to beseech us to be so: If we do our utmost, we cannot depend on our own Righteousness, but must rely on the mercy of God in Christ; which if you do, it will be the way to comfort here, or at length you will come safe to Heaven, which is the Prayer of

Your Compassionate Friend,

C. D.
T H E

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A DIS-

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning
TROUBLE of MIND,
AND THE
DISEASE of MELANCHOLY.

PART I.

PSAL. XXX. 5.

*For his anger endureth but a moment; in
his favour is life: weeping may endure for
a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

The INTRODUCTION.

THE Miseries under which the whole
race of Men have now for a long
time groaned, and under which
they still groan, are owing to the
Fall of Man. The day on which our first Pa-
rents complied with the temptation of the De-
vil, was a mournful day to them, and in its ef-
fects no less sad to us. It filled their once pure
B and

and quiet hearts with trouble and disorder, and made them unable to think of their great Creator with delight. It intercepted those chearful and comfortable beams of his Love, which were more satisfying to them than all the glories of the lower Paradise: For tho' it did, after the Fall, abound with all the same natural refreshments, with the same Rivers, Herbs, Trees and Flowers; yet it was to them no more a Paradise. No Musick could delight their sense, when they heard a terrible voice from God, summoning them to answer for their Crime; no objects could please their eyes, when they saw the Clouds thickning over their heads, and dreadful frowns in the face of their mighty Judge: All the Creatures could minister nothing to their ease or safety, when the great Creator was against them. From their Apostacy we may derive all our miseries; both the pains and sicknesses that afflict our Bodies, and the fears and terrors that overwhelm our Souls. Our Bodies are liable to a Thousand calamities that may be both long and sharp; but how long and how sharp soever they be, they do not altogether give us such a sensible and such lively grief, as we have when we are under distresses of Conscience, and when we are under a sense of the Wrath of God, that is due to us for Sin. There are many persons who endeavour by all the Rules of Art, to give relief and help against the mischiefs that attend our Bodies, but which after all their Art will go into the Grave; and there are as many, that by the Duty of their Office, and the

Part I. *The Introduction.*

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the Character they bear, are obliged to imitate their Saviour, *To preach good tidings to the meek, and to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,* Isa. 61. 1. But they are many times at a loss, to know what Remedies to apply to these inward and spiritual Diseases; and always unable to make their applications successful, unless God himself, by his Almighty Power, *Create Peace*, and turn that Chaos, and those Confusions under which a poor troubled Soul is buried, into the joy and light of day. It pleases the Wise God, that may make us serve to what uses he thinks most convenient for the good of the Universe, and the welfare of the Church, to suffer some of his Servants to feel the bitterness of Sin, and the terrors of his amazing-wrath; to be overwhelm'd with the fear of Hell, and to be for a long season even as in Hell it self; that so when they are delivered, they may warn those that are at ease, that they beware of Sin, lest it bring them also into a state so dreadful and so terrible; and that from their own experience, they may with tenderness and compassion strive more earnestly to assist and help those whose Consciences are in a flame, and who are full of anguish and tribulation: That when they are escaped out of the snare of the Fowler, they may strive to disentangle those who are yet in trouble; and being themselves cured of their horror and amazement, they may lead their yet wounded brethren to that kind Physician, to that loving Jesus, with whose Blood

their Wounds were cleansed and healed.

As to my self, having been in *Long affliction*, and great distress of Conscience for many Months, and under a continued fear and apprehension of God's displeasure; and being now, through his inexpressible Grace, not without some hope of his acceptance, being delivered from violent and overwhelming sorrows, I would most readily give all the advice and help I can to those that are yet mourning under desertions, and complaining that God is departed from them, and that he remembers them no more. After the many waves and billows that went over me, through the great goodness of God I now enjoy a calm; and I pity, and would fain help those who are yet labouring in the deep; and for them peculiarly I write this Treatise; in which, tho' there be many things less exact than a Critical Reader may expect; yet there are some in which, I hope, a distressed Soul may find relief. The Method I intend to follow, is this:

In this First Part,

1. To shew what is meant by the Anger of God; and whence it is that he is angry with his own Servants.
2. What obligations we are under to Patience and Humility, and several other Graces, when we are under a sense of his displeasure.
3. Whence it is that his Anger towards his own People is but for a short space.

CHAP. I.

*Of the Anger of God, and whence it is
that he is sometimes angry with his own
Servants.*

I. **W**E must know, that the Infinite Majesty of Heaven is, not subject to those inquiet passions to which our weak and frail nature is obnoxious; he is not sometimes what he was not before; he is always in himself the very same, his Essence is unchangeable; but he is pleased to stoop to our weakness, and clothes his Intentions in words that may most suitably convey to our minds the knowledg of what he designs. In his most pure and blessed nature there is a perpetual calm and tranquility; nor does he suffer any of those commotions and disorders that are in angry men. His *Anger* is his Resolution or his Will to punish his sinning-Creatures; or sometimes it relates to the evils themselves which sinners endure, as Pain, and Fear, and Sorrow, and Wars, and Famine, and Pestilence, and the like Calamities. He is said to be pleased with us, when we are obedient, and when his face shines upon us in a comfortable and a gracious manner; when he accepts our persons and our duties, and refreshes our hearts with the reviving-hopes of Glory, through Jesus Christ: But he is then angry, when he withdraws the chearful influences and quickning motions of his Holy Spirit;

also when we pray, and he shuts out our Prayer, and leaves our poor Souls to languish under despair or unbelief; and when we find in our selves no spiritual and heavenly Life. He may also be said to be Angry, when he sends long and sore afflictions and distresses on our Bodies and our Souls, and withholds his blessing from all the methods that are used with a design to give us help; and when he proceeds to a terrible execution of his threats, this Act of his is called Vengeance, as in *Psal. 99. 8. Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*

II. God is sometimes angry with his own people; it is indeed Paternal castigatory wrath that he sends upon them; but not destroying fury. Thus he is said to be angry with *Moses, Aaron, and Miriam*; and *Psal. 74. 1. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine Anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?* Thus *Heman* complains, *Psal. 88. 7. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.* And so the Church complains, *Lam. 1. 12. ch. 2. 1. ch. 3. 1.* The Reasons of this are such as these;

I. Because their Sins are of a greater aggravation than the sins of others. They sin against him when they have tasted of his Goodness, when he has offered to them more clear Light, more experience of his Love, than to the rest of Men; when he is wounded in the house of his Friends, he will resent such Injuries and Affronts; and they

Chap. 1. *Trouble of Mind, &c.*

7

they usually sin against more frequent Motions of his Holy Spirit; and after they have engaged to be his, they break their Vows, and forget their Covenants; they loyter in his Service, when they have by the peace of their Souls, and the hope of Heaven that he hath given them, found his Work to be a reward, and that he is a very good Master; and shall he not visit for these things? What fitter methods can he take, than to lash them for their ingratitude, and unbecoming Behaviour to so kind a Friend, as he has been to them all along? He is at more cost and charge with the Children of his Family, than with others; and if they disobey him, they must feel his Displeasure, and the smart of the Rod. *You only have I known of all the Families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities, Amos 3. 2.*

2. To warn others, and to wipe off all Aspersions that might be cast upon his Holiness. He is angry with his own, to let the profane World see that he is no respecter of Persons; and that Sin, wherever it is, shall not go unpunished. He puts some into the fiery Furnace, to let those that are at ease know what they have also deserved, and what they may expect, if they do not speedily Repent and turn. Some Ages feel the weightier Blows of his Hand, and are visited with severe Judgments, to teach future Generations to be more careful to observe his Laws, and to do his Will, Deut. 29. 22, 24. *The generation to come of the children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say when they see the*

plagues of the Land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, &c. even all nations shall say, wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? He lays some Countries desolate, that their Desolations may more effectually shew the evil of Sin, and preach Repentance to their Neighbours round about. He sets some on Fire, that they may serve as Beacons to warn the rest, of approaching Danger. He is sometimes angry, that he may maintain the Honour of his Laws, and the Justice of his Government. He throws some upon Sick beds, that others may by them learn to know their own frailty, and prepare for the like Tryals. Some he leaves in Darkness, and Anguish, and Tribulation, that others may learn to prize the Light, lest they come to the very same Calamity. He shoots his Arrows into the Souls of some of his Servants, that all who behold his severe and righteous proceeding, may tremble at it, and learn to fear him who is so Holy, and so Just a God. That they may not dare to venture upon those Sins, under the woful effects of which, they see their fellow-creatures groan so very much; and he must be an hardened Malefactor indeed, that will practice his old Crimes when he sees another whipt or executed for those of the very same kind. Thus the view, and the report of his Judgments have a natural tendency to reform the World, to purify and make it better, as Thunder and Lightning cleanse the Air, and make it more healthful. How wicked is this present World, notwithstanding the manifold Examples of his Justice? And how much

much more wicked would it be, if he suffer'd Sin always to be unpunished? His best Servants are too secure and careless, too forgetful of him, and of themselves, till he awaken them by some severe stroak upon themselves, or others, and make them to be more diligent, and more serious, when they see the Clouds gather, and the Night drawing on; and by his anger he designs to teach us all to put an higher value on the Love of Christ, and to make us know of how high a nature our Offence was, seeing his only Son endured so much of his Wrath, ere we could obtain a Pardon. And when we smart our selves under his displeasure, to make us ever admire the kindness of our Saviour, that freely suffer'd so much smart and pain for us.

3. He is angry with his own, to teach them to value his favour more than they ever did. If it were not that we feel the bitterness of his Anger, we should not have so sweet a relish of his Love. If he did not sometimes withdraw himself, we should not think his presence so comfortable as it is. If it were not sometimes Winter, and storm, and frosty Weather, we should not take so great a pleasure in the Summer-season. Oh! how pleasant are the Smiles of God, when we have long laid under the terror of his Frowns? How pleasant is it to find him to be indeed our Friend, when we have long thought him to be our Enemy? How pleasant is it to have the hope of Heaven, when a Man has long trembled at the very Gate of Hell? When we have been long wandring for our Follies,

Follies, as in a strange Land, how pleasant is it to come to our home again? After we have been among our Enemies, to come to our Heavenly Father, to have him to meet us with encouraging words, to embrace us in his Arms, to feast us at his Table, to call us his Children, to forget all our former Injuries, and to be at peace with us? How shall we run under his Wing for shelter, when we have found, that innumerable Dangers overtook us while he withdrew his Care? How shall we wait upon him with Obedience and Love, and yield him faithful Service in all that he Commands, when we remember what Grievs our former disobedience brought upon us? He is angry with us, to cure our Luxuries, our Wantonness, and Pride; and when our Follies have brought us low, we shall give a most hearty welcome to the first dawning of the day, to the first shining of his face; and tho before, we priz'd at a small rate his highest Favours, and his largest Entertainments, we shall now value one glimpse of Light, as much as we did the whole Sun before; and to partake, tho but of the Crumbs that fall from his Table, will seem to us both an honour and a priviledg. After many days of Storm and Darknes, 'tis the more pleasant to see the Sun; even the very Birds sing with a sweeter Note when there is a clear Sky; and the Furrows of the Fields rejoyce after a long Drought, to be refresh'd with the former and the latter pain. When a Country has been long harass'd with Confusions, Tumults, and bloody Wars, how delightful is the return of Peace?

When

When a soul has mourned a great while in fear and trouble, how delightful is it to hear the voice of its God, saying, *Be of good comfort!* How do his Promises, like dew from the womb of the morning, cause his poor drooping spirits to revive? *Isa. 12. 1.*

C H A P. II.

The Anger of God towards his People, is but for a short season; and why he is pleased to order it to be so.

1. **H**IS anger is but for a moment, if compar'd with the Eternity of Happiness which he designs them: Their troubles and afflictions shall have a period, but their glory shall never have an end: They weep for a while, and they shall rejoice for ever: They are disconsolate a few years on earth; but how little and inconsiderable are these to the vast durations of Eternity?

2. His Anger is but for a moment, if compared with the continuance of his Love. In his Favour is Life; that is, usually the greater portions of our Life are laden with his Benefits; we have more pledges of his Love, than messengers of his Wrath: We have more Mercies than Crosses: We have a thousand easie Blessings for one sharp Affliction: His Displeasure brings a storm, but his Favour shines when that is gone and past: We have many a fair Season,

Season, to one dark and gloomy Day. The Reasons why his Anger is but for a moment, are,

1. He remembers the frame of his poor people ; for if his Wrath should be long continued, they must utterly sink and perish ; Psal. 103. 14. *For he remembreth our frame ; he knoweth that we are but dust.* One Frown causes us to sink and tremble ; what then would his multiplied Frowns and Displeasure do ? He knows our tenderness, with what evil inclinations our nature is corrupted ; how prone we are to sin ; and how, if he should be strict to mark what we do amiss, he must continually destroy the works of his own hands, and have none left to serve him here on earth : He remembers with what frailties we are daily beset, and he pities us as a Father does the weakness of his Child : He could kill us in a minute, and take away our breath ; how soon can he scatter a little dust, and pull in pieces our frail constitution ? For we are as unable to resist his Anger, as the dust to resist the wind : he knows we are so weak, that if he let us alone, we shall soon decay ; and that there needs not the Force of his Arm, and the Greatness of his Power, to crush such worms as we are : As David said, *Is the king of Israel come out after a flea ?* 2 Sam. 24. 14. so may we in our distresses say to God, Why dost thou arm thy self with wrath against us, whom one word of thy mouth can throw upon the ground, or send into the grave ? It is not with him as with the great Oppressors of the world, that use their greater power to trample upon those that are of unequal

unequal strength ; no, he delights to bind up the broken, to heal the wounded, and to comfort those that mourn. *Isa. 57. 16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath ; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.* Such is the impatience, the unbelief, and the unsuitable behaviour of his people, that they give him cause enough to be always angry, but he does not proceed with the utmost rigour of his Justice ; he freely pardons what with right he might exact. *Psal. 78. 38, 39. Their heart was not right with him, They did flatter him with their mouth ; but he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not ; yea, many a time he turned his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath : for he remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.* And when our extremities are so great, and our sense of his displeasure is so very pressing, that we know not what to do, we may desire him to remember his own Greatness, and our Frailty ; that we are his own handy-work, and that we are no more able to resist his Power, than we are to change our own natures, and to be his Equals. *Job 13. 25. Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro ? Wilt thou pursue the dry stubble ? Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay, Job 10. 9.*

2. Reason why his Anger towards his people is but for a moment, is, Because he is obliged to it by his Covenant. *If they break my statutes, &c. Psal. 89. 31, 32, 33. then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes ; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I*

not

not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. He is obliged by the Covenant of Grace, to be their God, to use all the methods that his Infinite Wisdom sees necessary for their final Happiness; and if his Anger, and their own Afflictions will contribute to this, tho their flesh be pained, and their bodies smart, he will not fail to use those severities. His dearest servants may by temptation, and their unwatchfulness, be overtaken by their spiritual Enemies; they may wound and hurt themselves, and occasion his departure; and to excite them to a due consideration of their Folly, he will leave them for a season. Their sins are the object of his abhorrence, and he may send very sore troubles upon them, tho they shall even then come upon a gracious errand, and promote their future welfare, when in the anguish of their souls they may conclude them to be the mark of his Eternal Wrath; he will not spare his rods, nor by a fond Indulgence suffer them to take their own course; for a Parent, you know, will correct his own child, tho he concerns not himself with those that are strangers to the Family. The Anger of God for your sin may deprive you of your dearest Comforts, your most kind Relations, your most beloved Children, your Estate, your Health, and your Ease; and yet in all these he may have a design to make you more full of Holiness, and to bring you nearer to himself: This is an ordinary Discipline, wherewith he trains up all those whom he will convey to Glory, tho their own Reason, and their gloomy Thoughts, may judge that it is for a quite contrary purpose. He has

promised, That all things shall work together for our good ; and he is faithful when he lays upon us the severest strokes, because they stir up our sleeping Grace, and purge away our Sin.

3. Reason his Anger towards his people is but for a moment, Because whatever his present dispensations are, he will never throw off the Relation of a Father to them ; they do not render void the Kindness and the Grace by which he did at first adopt them to be his own. A Father when he frowns, and when he corrects, is still a Father ; and his bowels earn with him, when the rebellion and undutifulness of his child causes him to be severe. Tho we groan and weep through the bitterness of our grief, yet he changes not his Paternal care ; as Christ, when he was a man of sorrows, was pronounced by God to be his beloved Son, *Psal. 103. 13.* *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* None of our earthly Friends can be more tender-hearted than he is ; only with this difference, that they would heal our wounds when they first begin to smart ; and he being more skilful, does make our Cure to advance by slow degrees ; he does bereave us of this or that enjoyment which we dearly love, because he sees it necessary for our Salvation ; as 'tis many times expedient to cut off a gangreen'd part of the body, to save our Life. He will separate between us and our Iniquities, rather than that they should make a separation between us and him ; and there is nothing but a most tender Love in all this. *Jer. 31. 20.* *Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for*
since

since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. If there were any ways more mild and gentle, that would equally promote our good, he would use them with the greatest readiness, if our own absolute necessity did not require that he should bring Judgments upon us. Nor would he use at all those methods that seem to be rigid and severe. Those that are his people, should be in as much ease as other Men, and laugh and rejoice as much as they do; but only that he would by his displeasure teach us, that knowledg of himself, that faith, and that patience, and those other Graces, which without his seasonable Corrections we should never know. 'Tis more grateful to him to smile than to frown, to reward than to punish. Deut. 5. 29. *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.* When we wander, his Goodness and his Love will not suffer him to see us run to misery. His Anger will overtake us, to stop us in our hasty course, and to reduce us into the right way. He never strikes but for just Reasons, tho they may be for the present very much wrapt up in his own Decree. There are many people whom we are angry with, and reprove, whom notwithstanding we do in the mean time most sincerely love; and Christ has told us, Rev. 3. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*

4. The Anger of God is but for a moment, because he delights in Mercy, Psalm 103. 8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever.* It is long before he punishes, and 'tis with haste that he comes to our help when we repent; and many times before. In the midst of Wrath he remembers Mercy; he does not always inflict what we have deserved, but considers what is most proper for him to lay upon us, and what we are able to bear; and therefore he gives to us some mitigations with our most bitter Cup. He is called the *Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort*; and tho Punishment does proceed from him, as well as Tenderneſs and Affection, yet he is no where called the *Father of Judgments*. Mercy ariſeth from his own Nature, and he delighteth in it, Micah 7. 18. *He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* His wrath is ſaid to be reſerv'd in Golden Viols, Rev. 15. 7. i. e. it doth not flow forth all at once, but by degrees; but his Mercy is compared to a River, and a flowing Stream, *Iſaiah 66. 12.* to the Oyl of gladneſs, to the ſmell of Myrrh, Aloes, and *Cassia*. It is a Glory to this God to relieve the miſerable, and to help his Servants, when all their power and might is gone; and he ends the Controverſy with them, when there is cauſe enough on their ſide, that he ſhould purſue the Quarrel further. When he leads us into a Wilderneſs, yet he provides ſome Water, ſome reſreſhment for us there. It is one of the great Wonders of his

Providence, that he supports those poor Souls that have no light of Evidence, no sense of his Love, no hope, nothing but the fears of Wrath and Desolation; and yet the matter of Fact, and our own Experience plainly tells us, that so it is, his everlasting Arms are underneath, and his Power does maintain our Life, when we say, that he has forgotten to be gracious. He bottles our Tears when we weep, and hears our Groans when we lament, and proportions the Troubles that he sends, that they shall not be too long, nor too violent. Jer. 30. 11. *I will not make a full end of thee, I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.* And those Afflictions which his People suffer, are not in all respects proper Punishments, because his Anger is mixed with mildness, and mitigated by the Intercessions of a Mediator, Lam. 3. 31, 32. *The Lord will not cast off for ever; but tho he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his tender mercies.*

5. That his Anger is but for a moment, is for his own Name sake. His Nature is most inclinable to do us good; therefore the Prophet, to those Idolaters mentioned in 1 Kings 18. 24. says, *The God that answers by fire, let him be God;* and he chose that Element above the rest, to signify how soon we shall have Mercy, it comes as upon the wings of the Wind, it is as swift as the rays of Light. Hosea 11. 9. *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man.* A Man when he is greatly provoked by his Enemy, is not

not satisfied with having once made him feel his Anger, but carries on his Revenge to further degrees, and only ceases the pursuit with the Death of him that he first assaulted. But the Great God, tho he is able to Conquer those that oppose him, with a total Defeat and Ruin, yet he suffers them to breathe and live, that they may Repent, and that he may cause his Goodness to shine with a greater Brightness to the World. He could follow them with one Blow after another, with a Succession of new and greater Miseries, but he restrains his Anger for his own sake. And it maybe a great Consolation to poor afflicted People to consider, that they have to deal with God, and not with Men, when they have sinn'd; they have not to deal with Men that are full of Rage and Cruelty, but with a God that is gracious and full of Mercy; not with Men that may Caress them to day, and Hate them to morrow, but with a God that is unchangeable, and even when they are in the Fire, or in the Water, his Love is still to them the very same. Men think it a dishonour to spare their inferiours, if they do not by the lowest Submissions testify their Sorrow for their Crimes; but the Great God is so far above all his Creatures, that he may when he will, think them below his Indignation, and magnify his Goodness in sparing and forgiving them when they most deserve to dye, *Isaiah 4. 8, 9. For my names sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.* 'Tis his Power that moderates his Anger. Those Persons that have the least strength, either of Reason,

son, or of Courage, are the most passionate, and inclinable to Revenge. In Punishments he shews his Dominion over his Creatures, but his Power over himself, when he forgives great Injuries, and is slow to punish great Affronts; and his Power in those Acts of Grace is very great and illustrious. He is God, and not Man, there is more Compassion, and more real Pity in him, than in the most compassionate or tender hearted Man that we ever knew. He is God, and not Man, he whom we have offended, and who can destroy us, begins first to treat about a Reconciliation with us. This is not the manner and way of Men, who think that those who have offended them, are to make the first advances towards a repairing of the Breach. There is no Attribute in the displaying of which the Great God glories, so much as in this of Mercy; and 'tis by this that he would be known, *Exod. 34. 6, 7.*

6. That his Anger is but for a moment, is because he would make a difference between the righteous and the wicked. The Afflictions that he sends upon the Righteous, are to prepare them for Heaven and Glory. But those Scourges that he uses to the Wicked and Impenitent, are but the beginning of their Sorrows, the flashes of those Flames that will consume them for ever. The distresses of the Righteous are short, and so are the Prosperities of the Wicked. The Righteous are weeping here, but they shall rejoyce hereafter. The Wicked have now their Heaven, such as it is, and hereafter they go to an Eternal Hell, and there must they weep and wail,

wail, when the Good and Holy shall have all their Tears wiped away. The one shall find him to be a loving Father, and to have been so in all their Tryals and Calamities; and the other shall find him to be an Enemy, and to have been so tho they had many good things in the time of the present Life. The Righteous have Sweetness and Mercy mingled with their Sorrows here; but the Wicked shall have there, pure and unmingled and intolerable Wrath. Here, in the most heavy Strokes, the Servants of God find now and then some little Comfort, but his Enemies in that World must have no drop to cool their Tongues, no refreshment, nor support for ever. The same Sun that will cherish the Righteous with his everlasting Beams, will scorch the Wicked, and fill them with an inexpressible Rage and Fury. God will throw them from all their heights, silence all their lofty Speeches, and ruin all their vain-glorious Designs, *Dan. 4. 17. The demand is by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know, that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men,* that is, by the petitions of Angels, (*Charnock, of Gods Dominion, p. 767.*) who cannot endure that the Empire of God should be obscur'd by the Pride of Men. Besides the tender respect that he hath to his own Glory, he is constantly presented with the Solicitations of the Angels to punish the Proud of the Earth, that darken the Glory of his Majesty. 'Tis necessary for the rescue of his Honour, and necessary for the Satisfaction of his Illustrious Attendants, who would think it a shame to them to serve a Lord

that were always unconcerned in the Rebellions of his Creatures, and would tamely suffer those that spurn at his Throne. His Wrath to his Servants is with Mercy, and but for a moment ; but to his Enemies it will be severe and abiding Wrath.

C H A P. III.

Of the several Advantages that are designed by God to his Servants, in his being Angry with them only for a moment ; together with the Obligations which they are under from so merciful a Dispensation of his Providence ; and the several Improvements we are to make of it.

Inf. 1. **N**ONE of the People of God have Cause to conclude, That because he is angry with them at present, therefore they are in a state of Wrath. Our sense and feeling of things that are very bitter, joyned with the knowledge that we have of our Guilt, and our innumerable Sins, does frequently corrupt our Reason, and obscure our Faith. And from the severity of his present Dispensations, we are apt to say, he has forgotten to be gracious. *If the Lord be with us, as Gideon said, why then is all this befallen us ? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of ?* Judges 6. 13. he will be favourable no more. But this is the
Language

Language of our mistaken unbelief, Isaiah 49. 14, 15. *Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, she may; but I will not forget thee.* Isaiah 40. 27. *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, That my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Our Sins indeed may cause him to withdraw the manifestations of his Love, so that we shall feel no comfort in our Prayers, none in his Ordinances, none in his Words. Every threatening shall pierce us to the quick, and no promise yield us quiet; and yet for all this, he may with his vital Influences return again; and tho we have not seen either the Sun, Moon, or Stars, for many Days and Nights, yet a glorious Light may succeed afterwards. In sore Afflictions our grieved sense, and the fear that attends our Guilt, and the malice of the Devil, may put us upon desperate and unwarrantable Conclusions; and the deserted Person may say, *I am abhorred of the Lord, he counts me for his Enemy, he is cruel to me, he is departed from me.* He answers me not; I go to his Ministers, and they give me no relief; I go to his Word, and it is bitter to my taste, it fills me with gall and wormwood. I seek him in my Solitudes, and in the Assemblies of his People, but I find him not. He has left me, he has thrown me off. *The comforter that should relieve my Soul, is far from me. He hath built against me, he hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy. Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. He is unto me as a Bear lying in wait,**

and as a Lion in secret places, Lam. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10. This is a sad, and a doleful Case, and yet one that suffers all this, ought not to say, that there is no future help; for God may be gracious, and his wrath, tho very terrible and perplexing, is but for a moment. No Believer ought to conclude, that because he is under the displeasure of God at present, that therefore he is a Child of wrath; nor ought he from his present feeling, to dare to assert his Reprobation; it is an usurping that Judgment which does not belong to Men, and a positive Determination of that which we cannot know. We may as well conclude, that when the Sun sets, it will never rise again, or that when thick Clouds darken the Air, it will never be fair weather any more. We ought never to forget the Case of *Job*; never was any Man covered with a greater heap of Miseries, never was any Man more seemingly left of God, and harass'd by the Devil, than he was; never did any Man make more doleful complaints than what we hear from the poor Man in his heavy tryal, as *Job 10. 16. Thou huntest me as a fierce Lyon; and again, thou shewest thy self marvellous upon me: thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me. Chap. 19. 10. Know now, that God hath overthrown me, and compassed me with his net; he hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, mine hope hath he removed like a tree; he hath kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.* And yet what a glorious deliverance had the poor Man after all this! We ought not to say, that because we
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are miserable at the present, we shall always be so; or that because God is now angry, he will never be pleased again; no, we ought rather to remember, that it is but for a moment; and tho' the kind hand of a Friend may put us to pain, yet he does but search our wounds in order to a Cure; he will not poison our Sores, nor, as an Enemy, take pleasure in our Torments.

Inf. 2. We have great cause to be patient in all those sufferings that are the effects of God's displeasure, seeing it is but for a moment. *Mic. 7. 9.* *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; till he plead my cause.* There is nothing to which we are more obnoxious under the sense of God's displeasure, than to fretfulness and discontent; as *David*, *Psal. 31. 22.* *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.* And we should with all imaginable care be fortified against it. This grace of Patience is that for which we shall all of us have very much occasion during the manifold evils of this miserable World; for this we shall have occasion as we are Men, for as such we are born to trouble; and much more shall we need it if we be true Christians, for as such, we must expect more trouble from the corruption of our Hearts, from the World, and from the Devil; for if he sees us going to that Heaven from whence he is for ever excluded, his rage will prompt him to give us a continual molestation in our way thither. That we may therefore be prepared to resist his subtle and violent

violent assaults, and to bear those long and fore Tryals that may be our lot, let us have before our eyes these things:

1. If when God is angry with us, we are impatient, we shall provoke him to further wrath, and cause double the him to blows of his Arm, which are at the present heavy enough for us to bear. If the first corrections bring us not to a malleable and a tender frame, He will (if he design our good) be forced to send upon us many more ; our unruliness and impatience will add more pain and smart to the Rods that are upon us, and put a greater edge upon our trouble ; and so that which at the first was but a single stroke, will multiply to many more, and by this we shall make the evil of our affliction, which is design'd for our good, to become our sin ; and so carry that inconvenience to our Souls, which with a quiet and submissive frame would but hurt our Bodies. We lose by this means, all the comfortable blessings of a sanctified and a well-improved Cross, and make that yolk to gall us, which otherwise might lye with ease upon our necks.

2. Let us remember, that we are no way injured when we are under long afflictions ; and that whatever come of us, God is always very just: *He will not lay upon man more than right,* Job 34. 23. An earthly Parent in the warmth and heat of anger, may in too severe a manner correct the follies of his Child ; but that God that knows our frame, what is fit for him to do, and what we are able to bear, will proportion

tion his corrections to the necessities of our
use, and not suffer our troubles to stay a day
longer than is needful to accomplish those ex-
cellent ends for which they were design'd: He
may in his anger pull us down and make us de-
solate; but we know not what a comely stru-
cture he intends to build from these ruins; it
may be that the darkness that affrights us is to
usher in an eternal and a glorious day: *His
ways are far above our ways.* So much greatness,
wisdom and goodness as there is in him, should
produce in our hearts patience and resignation,
tho' we know not what a period he intends
to put to his present dark and unsearchable
designs. Tho' we are pained, he is faithful
still; and tho' he do not gratify our curiosity,
nor suffer our blind eyes to pierce into the
depths of his Counsels, yet let us hold this for
a certain truth, *That the Lord is righteous and
just in all his ways.* He may say to us, as Christ
said to Peter, *What I do thou knowest not, but
thou shalt know hereafter,* Joh. 13. 7. His Ju-
stice should silence our murmuring complaints;
and his faithfulness our discouragements and
faintings. He never afflicts us but with reason;
he never does it but with a design of our final
good. The Sword that wounds us, brings a
Balsom with it; it opens a passage to let out
our Corruptions, and then it heals and closes
up the wound again. Isa. 30. 18. *Therefore will
the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and
therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy
upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment.
Blessed are all they that wait for him.*

3. That we may bear his Anger with Patience, let us consider what Mercies he has given us ; and how much worse we might be, than now we are ; he frowns it may be upon us, but that frown might have been our final sentence ; and that anger which now is kindled against us, might have been Everlasting Burnings ; and tho he speak to us by terrible things, yet he might have said, *Depart from me, ye cursed* : The drops that fall upon us, might have been a Deluge and a Storm of Wrath ; and the fiery Furnace whereinto we are thrown, to consume our Dross, might have been our Hell. *Why does a living man complain*, a sinful man that might have been deprived both of Hope and Life long ago ? Oh how does our Gracious God, even in our sorest Trials, deal much better with us than we have deserved ! We multiply our sorrows to a vast account ; but if we compared them with our sins, their number would appear to be very small ; if we put our Crosses and our Iniquities into the same balance, we should quickly see what a mighty difference there is between them : It will be a considerable motive to Patience, to consider what we have deserved. We bewail the loss of the sense of the Love of God, and alas we did not value it as we should have done ! We complain that he has forsaken us, but who among us valued his Presence at the rate we might have valued it ? We say that he does not hear our Prayers, that he is deaf to our Request ; and how often did we pray as if we prayed not ? how often did he seek to enter into our hearts, and we gave him a repulse ? How often did

did he call and invite us to come to him, and we did not obey his call? Have we reason then to be impatient that he is a stranger to us, when we remember how he would have dwelt with us, but we shut him out? Tho it was our ignorance that betrayed us to it, and *we knew not what we did*. We reckon up our nights of darkness, how long they are, and how dismal; but we forget how he has given us many a bright and clear day, many an hour of Peace and Joy, for one of Grief and Trouble: We have deserved to be miserable all the days of our Lives, for every day we sin: we have many healthful seasons, as well as times of Sicknes; whereas he might have made our passage uneasie and troublesome in the deep waters, from the womb unto the grave; *Know therefore, that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth*, Job 11. 6. We suffer justly for our sins; if God should enquire into the multitude, the heinousness, and all the aggravations of our sins, we should have a greater multitude of Crosses: Let us cease then to be impatient; for he deals in great Tender-ness and Mercy with us: Our troubles have been it may be sharp and long, but they might have been more stinging, more bitter, and more violent, and drawn out to a more formidable length; but now because it is not so, *he hath visited in his anger, yet he knoweth it not in great extremity*, Job 35. 15. He has not stirr'd up all his wrath, nor amaz'd us with all the Thunder of his Power; let us not be like the *Israelites*, Psal. 106. 7. who provoked him, and remembered not the multitude of his Mercies.

4. Consider that he uses no other methods with you when he is angry with you, than what he has us'd with his dearest servants heretofore; and this may tend to compose your Spirits under long and sore Tryals; are you better than *Moses*, than *Job*, than *Heman*, than *David* and *Asaph*, and many other excellent and holy Men, with whom he was displeased, and who felt his Wrath, though it was but for a moment? Are we more dutiful and obedient than they were? do we not merit the Chastisements of our Heavenly Father as much as they did? yea, and much more. If we have the Spirit, and the privilege of Children, we ought not to murmur, though we have our share in the discipline of the Family. Would we have the Course of Providence inverted, and changed for us? Can we imagine that we shall be always spared, when so many great Saints have smarted under the displeasure of God for their sin? We are apt to think there is no sorrow like to our sorrow *wherewith the Lord hath afflicted us*, Lam. 1. 12. but we do not wisely inquire in this matter; for if we trace the steps of holy men of old, we shall find that innumerable, and very grievous Calamities were their portion as well as ours. We have heard of the distresses, and of the patience of *Job*; of the pains of his Body, and of the troubles of his Soul; and when either our Bodies or our Souls are more afflicted than his was, then it will be soon enough for us to begin to murmur; and if we do it not till then, we shall be as remarkable for our patience as he was. *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which*

is to try you, as though some strange thing hapned to you, 1 Pet. 4. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 9. All these things are accomplished in your brethren which are in the world; and this is duly to be thought upon; for there is nothing of which Satan makes a greater use, to perplex us in our hour of temptation, than of the length and the sharpness of our trials; as if therefore God were our Enemy because he does afflict; or that we are no Children because we are afflicted so very long; thus will the Evil Spirit suggest and say, If thou wert a friend of God, who is so compassionate, and so slow to wrath, would he follow thee with breach upon breach, with one stroke after another, and let his hand be heavy upon thee day and night? He supports, comforts and refreshes all his Servants, but thou hast no refreshment, nothing but anguish and vexation; therefore thou art none of his: but by Faith we must quench this fiery Dart, and know that the fruit of our affliction may be very sweet, though for the present 'tis very bitter; and that we are under the Conduct of that Wisdom which can order even this Cross for good; and whatever mists that envious Spirit may raise before our eyes, let us still remember, *that his anger is but for a moment*, that others, whom we are sure he lov'd, have undergone the like troubles; and his own dear Son was still a Son, when a man of sorrows; and that his Afflictions were of a great length from the Manger to the Cross. And if God will have us to be so far conformable to this blessed Person, so that we have no rest from trial, till we are quiet in the Grave; we should

should not distrust his goodness, nor murmur at it.

5. Let us compare our present Sufferings and Afflictions with that Happiness which is to come; His Anger is but for a moment, but his love will be for ever: He frowns for a moment, but he will shew them his pleased Face for ever: He corrects them, and they weep for a moment, but he will embrace them, and they shall rejoice for ever. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning*: And do we not find our hearts begin to spring within us, when we consider that we are in pain for a moment, but we shall be at ease for ever? Is not this good news to those that fear God, and yet are afflicted? Lift up your heads ye Mourners, ye Prisoners of hope, 'tis but for a little season: Let not your hearts faint; I know you will say, Oh, I could bear any thing but the wrath of God; he is angry with my Soul; he denies an answer to my Prayers; he speaks not to me one comfortable word. I look up to his Heavens, and they are as Brass: I run to his Ordinances, and hear his Word in the Assemblies of his People; but whilst others are wet with the dew of Heaven, I remain dry and neglected as I was. I seem to be *as the mountains of Gilboa, there is no dew nor rain falls upon me*. I seem to be under the Curse of God; and because I have formerly not improv'd the means of Grace, he seems to say of me as of the barren Figtree, *never let fruit grow upon thee more*: and can you tell me whither I shall go, and what I shall do in such a case as this? You must still in humble
 . submis-

submission wait upon the Lord, he stays from your present help upon a very gracious Design. He bottles your tears, and is acquainted with your griefs; and that anger that now bows you to the ground, shall in a little while be removed; and your faith and your hope will not be in vain. There are thousands of Joys prepared to meet you when you are a little more purified and prepared for them. Isa. 54. 7, 8. *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* Nothing can be less than a moment; 'tis the least part of time; and yet so small a thing as that is, are all our troubles here, to that endless Eternity which is to come: So if your outward afflictions, and your spiritual fears should last for Life, as none can give you assurance to the contrary; yet all this Life is but as a moment, as nothing to that state of Blessedness that comes afterward: Nor are the degrees of your sorrows here, proportionable to the degrees of your approaching glory: *For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,* 2 Cor. 4. 17. This great Apostle calls his afflictions very light, and yet there was never any that suffered more troubles from the malice of the world than he did; as you may see, 2 Cor. 11. 25; 26. What is a moment to a day, and a day to a year? And yet such, and infinitely less, are our longest afflictions here, to that Eternity. What is one grain of sand, as one says, (*Furieu Balance du*

Sanctuaire, p. 72.) to all those vast heaps of sand that are in all the Sea? What is one drop of Water to the vast Collections of it that are in the large Ocean? What is a little gnat to the whole Universe? So is all the affliction of this life which passes away, when compared with the glory which is to come: And yet a grain of sand is something in respect of the whole earth; and a drop is not altogether nothing, tho compared with the Ocean; for by a continual heaping of grain upon grain, it were possible to make a Globe as great as the Earth; and the Ocean might be emptied of its Water; but Eternity cannot be diminished; it suffers no changes; after Millions of Years in Happiness, it will be as sweet and as comfortable as it was the first moment. It is the Length of our Troubles and our Pain, that makes them more grievous: And as when we do not sleep, the night seems very long, and the doleful hours of our sickness seem to move with a much slower pace than those of our pleasant health. Thus *Job* discourses as if his time, being clogg'd with miseries, seem'd an Eternity, *Job* 7. 15, 16. *My soul chuseth strangling, and death rather than life; I loath it, I would not live always; let me alone, for my days are vanity:* He was weary of being in so long pain; and thought that his afflicted life would never have an end: But yet all the afflictions of the present time, are not worthy to be compared with that glory which shall be revealed, *Rom.* 8. 18. We are near to a Blessed Change; and who would not undergo the dangers of a troublesome Voyage for a month, if he knew that he should return laden

laden with great Treasures to his home, and live in Splendor ever after? What a pleasure is it to such as are besieged, to know that they shall certainly be relieved in a little time? It causes them, tho' press'd very close by their Enemies, to resume a new Courage, and to hearten one another. So should it be with all Believers; the day of their Lord's coming draws near, and then he will put all their Enemies to the flight, and reward their Diligence and Perseverance: The Enemy of our Souls is full of Rage; but that which fills him with fury, may yield us comfort, even because we know that *his time is short*. *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly*, Rom. 16.20. Oh what comfortable words are these! that enemy that fills us with vexation, and whose malice is both great and constant, shall in a little time not molest nor interrupt our satisfactions any more. Your tears that you shed for your offences now, are very just; 'tis what we owe to God for having sinned so much against him; but shortly we shall be with him, and never complain of his absence from us any more: When a man is tost with storms, and sees no prospect of the shore, 'tis very dismal; but it is not so with us who have our Haven in our view: What if our troubles should continue for Twenty or Thirty Years? this would be very overwhelming to our sense; and yet it is nothing when compared with an Eternity of Joys above: How soon will this be over? but how long will that remain? It casts a great damp upon all things under the Sun, that they are unsatisfying, and that they are very short; how

pleasant soever they are to us, they will depart : Our Friends, and all the Delight of their Conversation ; our Riches, and all the Respect and Service they procure us, will fade away : Our beloved Bodies, which we maintain with great Expence and Care, will leave us, and must go into the Grave ; but our Happiness will be for ever ; it is *Eternal Happiness*, and what that is, our thoughts cannot comprehend, nor our words express ; we shall then know what it is, when we are in actual Possession of it. To be *for ever with the Lord*, what an encouragement does this afford to Patience and Resignation ? To be with him, who is our Portion, and our all ; to be with him, and to be without our sin that provoked him to wrath, and made our spirits sad ; what an Heaven will this be ! As this life by its tedious afflictions seems to those that are in distress to be as an Eternity ; so the pleasures of that undecaying life will seem but a moment to us, it will be so very pleasant ; and we are near to it : Tho the pains that forerun our departure, prove to be very sharp, yet in a moment death, whenever it comes, will be past ; in a moment we shall see the face of God that was hid from us here ; we shall be changed as in the twinkling of an eye ; and when we are in that Eternity, shall we then say, that we cleansed our hearts in vain ? Shall we not then see, that we had no cause to murmur or repine ? All our Faculties will be gratified with proper Objects, and with suitable Employment ; and all overspread and swallowed up with a quick and a lively Joy. Oh how blessed are the Tears
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that will lead us to such a Joy? Blessed is the Cross that will yield us such fruit as this; and blessed be that God who will bestow such a reward upon us: When we come there, we shall sing in the consideration of those very afflictions that, while we were on earth, made us sigh and groan. It is good to be there; and how freely should we suffer our thoughts always to dwell upon the pleasant Subject, but that our worldly business, and the necessary affairs of Life, call us away from the Mountain of our Transfiguration? However let us not forget, that these things are the Truths of God, which he hath shewed to his servants, and which shall shortly come to pass; and they are very near too; and should have a suitable influence upon us. How did the Martyrs of old rejoice, when they saw the day wherein they were to suffer? How did they embrace and encourage one another, saying, We want but an hour or two of Heaven: We have but one combat more to finish, and we shall be with Christ: We dine upon bitter Herbs, but we shall sup with him: Ere the Crowd that came to see us dye, be dispers'd, we shall be with God, and with innumerable Angels, and the spirits of the Just: With what calmness have the blessed Sufferers bid this world adieu, saying, Farewel Sun, Moon, and Stars, and welcome better Lights: Farewel Wives and Children, Friends and Acquaintance: Farewel ye deceiving Pleasures of the World; and now welcome ye joys of Paradise; welcome thou sweet Cross of Christ; and welcome death that will convey us thither: And thus their

souls were driven in Chariots of Fire to their Father's House: Whether there be Musick in the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres, as some of the Philosophers imagined, we know not; but 'tis very likely that the separated soul of the Patient and Triumphant Christian, will have those Angels that rejoiced at its Conversion, that wait to carry it to its blessed Home, to present it to the Throne of God, with joyful Praises, and united Hallelujahs: Thus we should admire and imitate the Patience of the Saints, whose Life was begun with darkness and sorrow, but ended with Light and Pleasure; began with a Combat, but concluded with Victory: And then shall the Soul that a few moments before was disconsolate, have cause to say in that day, *Isa. 12. 1, 2. O Lord, I will praise thee; tho thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation, the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

C H A P. IV.

Of the Great Love of Christ in suffering the wrath of God in his Soul; which is the more to be admired, in that he bore it for us, and not for the fallen Angels; and because now he is from his own experience more qualified to relieve us under all our temptations.

Inf. 3. **H**OW great cause have we to value Jesus Christ, who by suffering the wrath of God in his own person, has procured this priviledge for Believers, That the Anger of God towards them shall be only for a moment? Had it not been for his spotless satisfaction, the Divine Justice would have perpetually flam'd out against us; and he would not only have been angry with us now, but for ever. He has delivered us *from the wrath to come.*

That which is easy to us upon our Faith, was purchased by him at a very dear Price; he shed his own Blood to obtain Peace and Mercy for us. Oh how great was the Burden of that heavy Cross which he bore for us? how terrible and amazing was that wrath which he felt in his bitter and his doleful agonies, when he saw not one Smile in his Father's face; when it was with him an hour of thick darkness; and when under the smart of what he felt, and the view of what he was to feel, he said, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?* And when

the agonies of his Soul did affect his Body, and made it even in a cold Season to sweat as it were drops of Bloody. What a gloomy time was that when he fell upon his face, and in a sorrowful posture, with strong Cries and Tears prayed, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.* What flaming wrath was that which incited him, when he uttered those dreadful words, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* The Angel told Mary, That a Sword should pierce through her Son, *Luk. 2. 35.* to see what injurious usage her Soul met withal; but how much sharper was the Sword that pierc'd the Soul of Christ himself? The wrath that he bore, would have totally overwhelm'd and destroyed Angels and Men, had they joyned their strength together. There was none but he that was able to sustain such a Combat, and to bear such a Load. Oh where had we guilty Creatures been, had not he dyed for us! God would have been our Enemy, and Hell our Portion: His Holiness would not allow him to be gracious to us, without a Satisfaction; and there was none that was able to make it, but his own dearly beloved Son; and this excellent Person freely did it. And what cause have we to admire the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of this Love, which passes Knowledge! *Eph. 3. 18.* Angels in Heaven wonder at it, it was so great in it self, and accomplished in such a painful and a costly way: and we may justly be fill'd with a wondring joy, for we are more concern'd, and our Sin and Guilt makes us to need it more than they do. There was nothing in us to move him

him to begin, or to finish, the blessed work of our Redemption ; nothing but misery : He saw us lost, and he came to find us : He saw us perishing, his bowels earned within him, and his own Pity and Compassion made him to come and save us. What punishment had we deserved for our manifold transgressions ? And he came and bore the punishment that was our due, and discharg'd that debt which we were never able to pay. How kind was he, that thought not his own Life, nor his own Blood, too much for us ? Who ever expos'd his Person and his Life for an Enemy ? and yet he dyed for us when we were so ; as marvellous an Act of Mercy, as if a Prince's Son should lay his Head upon the block to save one that had rebell'd against the Crown and Government of his own Father : What does he require from us for all that he has done ? he asks nothing but our Love, and shall we not give him our best Affections, our highest thoughts, and our hearts, which he has so dearly bought ? have even any of those things to which we give our love, done so much for us as he has done ? He has the best Title, and will prove our truest Friend in the latter end ; had it not been for him, we could never have prayed to God with hope, nor liv'd without a fearful expectation of Vengeance : We were Children of wrath, and must, but for him, have been the Heirs of wrath too. Who would not love such a Benefactor ? Who would not give him all, who gave himself for us ? It is by his death that God is pleas'd, and that his Anger is but for a Moment to those who receive his Son :

Son: God hath smelt a sweet savour in this Sacrifice, and is highly pleased with it, and is pleas'd with us upon this account. He does not now follow us with wrath, but invites us to himself in mercy; he has sheath'd his flaming Sword, and is ready to embrace us in his Arms; and though he sees nothing in us to excite his goodness, yet every time he looks upon our blessed Lord, he sees one who has entirely pleased him, who has done his will, and who is the beloved of his Soul, and it's for his sake that his anger towards us is so long delayed; and that when it comes, it is but for a Moment. Let us love this Redeemer with all our hearts, remembering that terrible sentence of our Apostle, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, i. e. Cursed till he come again, 1 Cor 16. 22.* There are two things that should engage us to love him, for his bearing the wrath of God.

1. That he bore it for us, and not for the fallen Angels.

2. That from his own experience he is able to help us under all our temptations, and when we are under the sense of God's displeasure.

1. Christ bore not the wrath of God for the fallen Angels; they fell from him as we did, but he designs not to raise them again; they groan'd under the wrath of the mighty Judge, and they must always groan under it; no beam of chearful Light will shine into their Dungeon; no Messenger will be dispatched to give them
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the glad-tidings of Salvation ; the anger of God threw them out of Heaven, and the door is for ever shut ; they know this to be their woful Case, and therefore they rage against him, and against his Servants, and his Interest in the world. What could move Christ, to take the nature of Man, and not of Angels ? *Heb. 2. 16.* to say to us, Live, and to suffer them to dye ? to visit our sinning World, to set us at Liberty, to set open the Prison-doors, whilst he suffers them to roar in chains of wrath ? As they have greater Capacities, and Natures more knowing than ours ; so they might have honoured their Creator more than we, had they been redeemed ; but they must mourn for ever, and never sing his Praise ; they must grieve whilst we rejoice ; whilst we look for our Lord, they tremble in the fear of his coming ; whilst we have the sweetness of hope, they are in anguish and vexation, in despair and horror ; we have our Sabbaths, but they have no days of rest ; we can through Jesus Christ call God our Father, but they know him not by such a comfortable Name ; they feel his Power, but they tast not his Love ; they tremble under his Vengeance, but all comfort and Joy is fled away from them for ever ; why are we in the light, and they in darkness ? Why is Christ a Physician to us, whilst he is a Judge to them ? truly nothing makes the difference but his own love ; and what manner of love is this !

2. It was great love in Christ to bear the anger of God, because now his poor tempted Servants have one to whom they may repair in all their straits. *Heb. 2. 18. For in that he himself*

self hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. 'Tis a great relief to the miserable and afflicted, to be pitied by others; as *Job. 19. 21. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me:* It is some relief when others, tho they cannot help us, yet seem to be truly concerned for the sadness of our case, when by the kindness of their words, and of their actions, they do a little smooth the wounds that they cannot heal; but it is an unspeakable addition to the Cross, when a man is brought low under the sense of God's displeasure, to have men to mock at his Calamity, or to revile him, or to speak roughly; this does enflame and exasperate the wound that was big enough before; and it is an hard thing when one has a dreadful sound in his ears, to have every friend to become a Son of Thunder: It is a small matter for people that are at ease, to deal severely with such as are afflicted; but they little know how their severe speeches, and their angry words pierce them to the very soul: 'Tis easie to blame others for complaining, but if such had felt but for a little while what it is to be under the fear of God's Anger, they would find they could not but complain. It cannot but make any person very restless and uneasie, when he apprehends that God is his Enemy. It is no wonder if he makes every one that he sees, and every place that he is in, a witness of his grief; but now it is a Comfort in our Temptations and in our Fears, that we have so compassionate a Friend as Christ is, to whom we may repair. *Heb. 4. 15. For we have not an High-*

High-Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in every time of need. Had it not been for his Mediation, the absolute and pure Deity would have been too glorious and inaccessible to us; but he is cloathed with our nature; and though it has undergone several alterations, since he is exalted; yet we are sure that he retains a tender sence of our miseries: And tho he be very high, he does not think it below him to regard the most troubled and sorrowful Believer: He was on earth acquainted with grief, *Isa. 53. 3.* And has carryed to Heaven with him a remembrance of what he felt in his own Temptations, and of what he felt when his Father frown'd upon him; and his own experience renders him more capable of helping us; and makes him full of pity, when he sees us mourn; well knowing what was his own Case. As God has fashioned the hearts of all men, and some who have naturally more mercy and pity than others; and then the holy Spirit by its renewing grace, carrying their good Dispositions to greater degrees, and proceeding, and working usually according to their tempers; so it is certain he temper'd the heart of Christ, and made it of a softer mould than all the tenderness of all the men in the world put together, would have made it: he had such a humane nature, that might be more merciful than all Men and Angels together, *Goodwin, Christ's Heart in Heaven. p. 55.* Our groans and our sighs

sighs reach his Heart above; and tho he does not come with help just when we desire it, yet he is providing for our welfare, he sends us some inward supports, when we have not an immediate deliverance : he will not suffer us totally to sink, tho he may leave us for a while to try our faith, or to let us understand our own weakness ; we may think that our vessel will be covered with waves, when he is guiding us to shore; even when we think that he is asleep and has forgot us, and cares not though we be cast away : only let us never cease to say, *Master, save us, or else we perish.*

C H A P. V.

Shewing the unreasonableness of long-continued angers among good People ; as also, that the temporary effects of God's displeasure, are more eligible than the wrath of Men. Of the Excellency of Religion ; and that the Enemies of the Church have no cause to insult over it, because of its certain deliverance, and the dismal Conclusion of their own Wickedness ; upon which account Christians have no Reason to envy their Prosperity.

Inf. 2. **S**Eeing God is angry but for a moment,
How unreasonable are long-continued
Angers among good People? *Let not the sun go*

*down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil, Eph. 4. 26, 27. i. e. he that has injured or provoked another, must come to a Temper, and sue for a Reconciliation speedily, or else before the time of solemn praying to God, which was constantly at Evening, and so the Exhortation bears proportion with that, Matth. 5. 23, 24. If thou bringest thy gift unto the altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift, and first be reconciled to thy brother. See Dr. Hammond in loc. It is a strange thing that any good people should be so passionate and hasty, as some are; they are quickly enraged, and hard to be reconcil'd; and there are many that will keep their Anger for several months, and it may be years together. Oh! how unlike is this to that God whom they call their Father in Heaven, who is slow to Wrath, and whose Anger towards them is but for a moment! And what an Honour, and a Privilege would it be to resemble him? If he were not more patient with his Creatures, and his Children, than they are with one another, What Confusions, what woful Punishments would the World be filled withal? *Anger rests in the bosom of fools, Eccles. 7. 9.* Your hasty passionate people are commonly the weaker sort of Christians; and tho the strong must pity their weakness, and bear with them, yet they must not bear with themselves, but pray and strive against it, and not coin Excuses to defend that which is inexcusable, which is a reproach to Religion, and in it self a great Sin. A good Man may be surpriz'd on a sudden, and put into*

into a fret ; but to be always fretting, and uneasy, and displeased with those that have injured you, is a thing very unsuitable to the Example of your blessed and your meek Saviour ; what pleasure can such take in hearing that their Enemies abroad lose the day, when they have a worse Enemy in their own breasts, that leads them Captive, and takes them at the first assault ? The worst Enemies in this sense, are those of a Man's own house. And it is a wonder that those persons who appear to be very Conscientious in other things, yet indulge themselves in this ; they give place to the Devil, and he casts a mist before their Eyes ; and tho he cannot keep them from fearing other Sins, yet he so cheats them with false pretences, that they do not believe rash Anger to be a Sin, or are easily drawn to the Commission of it. What differences have been kept up in Churches ; in Families, among Acquaintance and Friends, for a long space together, whose Anger should have been like that of God, but for a moment ? They consider not aright their own duty, nor the infirmity of Mankind, and how most of their Errors are to be cured in a loving, and and a gentle manner. We are unwilling to pardon our Enemies, or the Injuries of our Friends, and God is most ready to forgive us all. Eph. 4. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* There are, it may be, some Angers that have lasted ten or twelve years, and what Estrangement, what Distance, what Shiness is there among such ? It may be spoken

to their shame. How hardly will Men that have received an Injury, speak well of the Persons that have given them, perhaps but a slight provocation? They'll have no Commerce, nor Familiarity with them; but, is this a blessing of those that curse us, and a praying for those that dispitefully use us? Is this an Imitation of our Gracious God, that has forgiven us all, innumerable provocations? I mention not here your brave Fellows, that upon every small Affront, are for challenging another to give them Satisfaction, that are so weak, that they cannot agree without a Duel; whom a false notion of Honour pushes forward to those rash enterprises, that are condemned both by the Laws of God, and the Laws of Men. And is not he a stout man who has the courage to trample upon the authority of his Maker, and his Rulers too; who dares venture his damnation, to preserve his Reputation; and hazards the sending of his own Soul, or that of his friend, to Hell, to keep him from the name of Cowardise on Earth? What a low value have these persons of their lives, that throw them away meerly to satisfy their own passion? And in what posture or preparation is that man for dying, that dyes to satisfy his own Revenge? It would be more honourable to forgive a fault, than to pursue it after such a bloody manner; but you have not so learned Christ, *Jam. 1. 19. Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*

Inf: 3. Seeing the anger of God is but for a moment,

ment, then 'tis better as to the temporal effects of it, to fall into the hands of God, than into the hands of Men. We may say of all wicked men, what *Jacob* says of *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Gen. 49. 5. Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united: Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel; their tender mercies are cruelty, Prov. 12. 10.* Wicked men are soon transported into violent passions; and when they are armed with a power suitable to their Rage, what horrible effects does it then produce? they are inspired with barbarous Principles and Designs, by an evil spirit, that delights in mischief: And he communicates to them of his own Fury; And what is it that they then scruple? Nothing softens or makes impressions on their cruel hearts: Of these the several Massacres there have been in *Ireland*, and *Piedmont*, and *France* have been sad instances; they spared not the aged, the feeble, the sick, the young; no Age or Sex but felt the woful effects of their wrath and rage; they have torn poor harmless Infants from their Mothers Breasts, others they have killed in the Womb; some they have cut in pieces, others they have put to long Tortures and Lingring Deaths; and were not moved at all with the hideous cries of Parents, that dyed several deaths in beholding their Children dye; and then when their eyes had beheld the sad Spectacle, had their own Blood shed. Oh what a vast difference is there between the temporary Anger of God, as to outward evils, and that of men? He no sooner
sees

feels us at his feet, but his bowels earn over us; and he raises us up with his hand, and bids us be of good cheer; but these cruel men delight to trample on the poor and the desolate: He hears our cries when we pray, but they are deaf to all the entreaties and supplications of afflicted and miserable People; they set themselves to invent methods of Torture, to make those that are within their power to dye with greater pain and sorrow; but *God does not willingly grieve, nor afflict the children of men.* Their wrath is unruly, does assign it self no bounds; they know no moderation; they forbear nothing that tends to gratify their Lusts; but it is a comfort that our God is of Great power, and his mercies are infinite; men go about that work, which God sometimes permits them to do, with cruel intentions to ruin and destroy; but God with a design in all his Corrections to purify and reform, and to do us good in the latter end, *2 Sam. 24.*

13, 14. Gad came to David, and told him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy Land? Or wilt thou flee three Months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days pestilence in thy land? Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.

Inf. 4. What a good Master is God, whose anger is but for a moment? other Masters may be hasty, and froward, and hard to please; but he is patient and slow to wrath; he is never

angry till we disobey his voice, and by our Laziness in his work, force him to it ; and even then his nature enclines him to moderate our stripes ; and he adds no more, than what are necessary to promote our good ; he treats us not as slaves, but exercises toward us a mild and a favourable Government : He threatens a long while, before he punishes ; the clouds gather blackness, to give us notice of a coming Storm ; and the Thunder of his wrath, as well as that of nature, doth roar before it falls : he threatens, and advises, and perswades, and uses several affectionate expostulations with us, before we feel the Rod ; and when in vindicating his own right, he seems to be very Just, he ceases not at the same time, to be very Good ; we frequently provoke him, and he is most ready to forgive ; he seeks not advantages against us, nor waits for our halting ; it grieves him when we sin, and he is only angry that we may repent ; he delights in peace, and not in war ; in the manifestations of his Mercy and Love, more than in the terrible discoveries of his wrath : He whets his Sword before he strikes, that in the preparations of his Judgments, we may see what we may expect, and seek to prevent them : He summons us to surrender our selves, before he begins to make us, by sharper methods, to be sensible of our follies ; and whilst his Rod is in his hand, he stays to see if we will even then return ; and he is unwilling to punish, even when he is forced to do it ; as a tender Judge does with sorrow and regret, pronounce Sentence upon a Malefactor, *Hos. 11. 8. How shall I give thee*

thee up, O Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?
Psal. 78. 38. Many a time he turned his anger away.
He recall'd, or order'd his anger to return, (as
one expresses it) as if he were unresolv'd what
to do ; he recalled it, as a man does his Servant
several times , when he is sending him upon an
unwelcome Message; or as a tender-hearted Prince
trembles, when he is to sign a Writ for the death
of a Rebel, that had been before his Favourite ;
he blots out his name again, and flings away the
Pen: He singles out here and there some of his
Servants, when he might punish all for their sins ;
he makes one smart, to be a warning to the rest ;
and according to the Doctrine of the School-
men, He recompences good works far above
their merit ; but he punishes Crimes far be-
low their demerit. He makes his Mercy to tri-
umph over Judgment; he punishes with regret,
and he retains a great deal of his wrath when
he corrects, but he keeps no measure when he
rewards ; and the miseries of the miserable are
not greater, than the joy and happiness of the
blessed. Oh ! who would not serve so gracious
and so good a Master as God is ? and who is
long before he is angry, and who is soon ap-
peased again ? Are the cruel commands of Sa-
tan, the slavery of the World, the defilement of
Sin, to be preferred to the gentle and the pure
Commands of God ? How many Curse their
folly in adhearing to these ! but none repent
that they have been employed in his service.
His most Aged Servants find the greatest Honour
and delight in having served him very long,
and would not quit their experienced and kind

Master for all the World: They know that his Corrections are short, but his Love is Everlasting; his wrath is for a moment, but their Heaven will be for ever.

Inf. 5. The Enemies of the Church of God have no Reason to insult over such as are afflicted in it; for tho God for their sins is angry, yet *his anger is but for a moment.* Thus they treated David, Psal. 41. 1. *All that hate me whisper against me; an evil disease, say they, cleaveth to him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.* And Psal. 42. 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they say continually unto me, Where is thy God?* They thought him entirely forsaken, and abandon'd for ever; putting these Questions to him, What is now become of thy God, in whom thou wast wont to boast? Where is he now whom thou didst once call thy refuge and thy hiding-place? Where is his power and his goodness, that he leaves thee to such a deep and violent affliction? In allusion to that of *Shimei*, 2 Sam. 16. 6, 7, 8. *Thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the Kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy Son: Behold, thou art taken in thy mischiefs, because thou art a bloody man.* This bold Man put a wicked interpretation on the Providence of God; and because *David* met with so many troubles, and such interruption in his Affairs, ere the Kingdom was well settled in his hand, he thought that

that God was against him ; but he lived to sit with prosperity on the Throne for many years together ; and *Shimei* had leisure enough wherein to repent of his foolish and extravagant reproaches of so good a King. Thus the Barbarians thought that *Paul* had been a Murderer, because a Viper fixed upon his hand, and that vengeance had pursued him for some great offence ; till he shook it off, and taught them to see how ill-grounded their opinion was, and that the God they thought his Enemy, did assist him to work Miracles. When you see any greatly afflicted, and groaning under a sense of the wrath of God, you ought rather to tremble than to rejoyce ; to weep than to laugh ; to consider how holy and how just God is, seeing he will not spare even his own, for all his Elect shall at one time or other taste the bitterness of sin. You that were never serious, have reason to humble your selves, and to think what may you expect, when his Children are Corrected after so severe a manner ; If his own Family suffer such afflictions, what has he then in store for his open Enemies ? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? *Prov. 24. 17, 18. Rejoyce not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.* Entertain not a secret pleasure in the downfall and distress of any Man whatsoever ; for these inhuman affections are so displeasing to God, that they may provoke him to translate the Calamity from thy

Enemy unto thee, and thereby damp thy sinful joy with a double sorrow; first to see him delivered from his trouble, and then to find thy self involved in it: See *Patr. Paraph. in loc.* Do not triumph over any in affliction, lest the Cup be taken out of their hand, and put into yours. Do not with the Friends of *Job*, censure them for greater sinners than any in the World, because of their sorer Tryals; as if you were acquainted with the secrets of the Decrees of God, and could pierce, with your shallow Reason, into the bottom of his unfathomable Judgments. Those that are under an apprehension of the Divine displeasure, know that it is for sin; it is that which troubles and afflicts them more than any thing besides; but you ought not to conclude that they are sinners beyond the rest of Men; but rather wonder at the Goodness of God, that he is gracious and more favourable to any, when they all deserve to dye. Do not, by reproachful Language, add affliction to those that are afflicted. *Zech. 1. 15. I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased; and they helped forward the affliction.* It was the cruel insulting of wicked Men over her miseries, of which the Church was sensible, when she says, *Mic. 7. 8. Rejoyce not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I set in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.*

Inf. 6. How much happier is the condition of a good Man, than of one that shall remain impenitent in his wickedness? He is angry with
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the one for a moment; but with the other he will be so for ever. The Servants of God have never so much cause to mourn under the sense of the heinousness and aggravation of their Sins, as they have cause to rejoyce in the riches and the freeness of his Grace; They have never so much cause to be troubled at their own distress, as to sing at the remembrance of his holiness; They have cause to weep indeed, because they have provok'd so good a God to wrath; and to be glad that his anger is but for a moment. They have cause to be concerned that they have made him to frown; but cause to rejoyce that he will smile on them for ever. The Righteous have a bitter Cup; but as 'tis here mingled with love, so it prepares them for a sweeter tast of heavenly pleasure. *In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them,* Psal. 75. 8. God does correct his own here with measure; but his punishments of the wicked will know no bounds; wrath shall come upon them to the utmost, and how low must they sink, and what a load must they bear who have a God to punish them, whose Being is Eternal, and whose Power is Omnipotent? On his own he frowns for a season, and he does it to bring them to their Duty; but on his obstinate, unrelenting enemies, he will frown for ever. He will abhor them, he will cast them out of his presence, trample upon them in his fury, and leave them to be the Brands

Brands of Hell, and the Prey of Devils. Now indeed, we cannot with all the Terrors of the Lord, which are terrible beyond expression, perswade Men to repent, tho' we tell them death and destruction is at hand, tho' we shew them the threats of the Scripture, the Examples of their evil predecessors that are gone to their own place; they slumber on, tho' we tell them of the danger, and of a Pit that is opening its mouth to swallow them up, tho we see wrath gathering, and the Clouds ready to burst, and bid them make haste to get a shelter before the Storm come; tho we bid them flye for their Lives, out of *Sodom*, they still linger and delay: But after death, they cannot, if they would, be secure; they will then have no pillows whereon to rest their heads, no water to quench their thirst, no friend to help them, no God to hear their Cries; they cannot then stop their ears at the roaring Wrath of God; they cannot then stupifie their Consciences, nor put the evil day far off: Now they make a shift to stifle the checks of their own consciences, they mock at the Threats of God, and deride his Message; but, Sinners, you shall sadly know, what a dreadful and a terrible God you provoke to wrath; all your Entertainments and Diversions, all your Mirth and Laughter, all your carnal Comforts, and your jolly Company will be gone, and be gone for ever: And what will then remain? nothing but Consternation, Amazement, and Woe; nothing but Anguish and Tribulation. Who shall speak comfortably to you? who shall deliver when you are fallen into the hands

hands of the Living God? when you shall find that God, that is a gracious Father to the Saints, to be a severe Judge to you; when he who is the Joy of their Hearts, shall depart from you; and he who refreshes them with the Smiles of his Face, shall kill you with his Frowns: What will you do, when the full Wrath of God shall be poured on your guilty Souls? Where will you turn, when it shall scorch and burn you, and set you all on Fire? How will it overwhelm you, when you find that all your hideous Cries, all your Lamentations and your Groans, are to no purpose? When you are in the power of cruel Devils, and meet with no pity from God, none from his Angels or his Saints? We think it long to be in pain for a month or two, or for a year; but how long will they think it to be, who are to be in pain throughout all the durations of a sad Eternity? We think it long when we sleep not in the night, and wish for the light of day: But Oh what a long night will that be, and how uncomfortable, that will have no morning; that will not be succeeded with a Beam of Day for ever! Men do now think an hour or two in attendance upon God, to be a great while; they think Fast-days and Sabbaths to be long; but if they come to that misery, Oh how long and how tedious will they find Hell to be! How insupportable it is, and how unavoidable! Hear therefore, all you that live in sin; hear and live; oh do not throw yourselves down that Precipice, under which there is a Sea of Wrath, and a Lake of Fire: O do not wound, nor destroy, nor torment your own Souls;

Souls ; do not carry fuel to that Fire which will never be quenched ; do not run into the Furnace out of which there is no escape ; for the Lord's sake, and for your own sake, and for the sake of your friends that would fain see you to become Religious , awake and call every one of you upon your God ; seek him while he may be found, hear his voice while it is called to day, lest the God that alone can help you, laugh at your Calamity ; lest he that is now so merciful, hereafter take pleasure in your Punishment ; if you will forget your danger, and sleep on, know when you are in Hell, you will be then forced to open your eyes, and they must never be closed again. Oh what a dreadful and amazing sight will you then see ; when you see the Great God to be your Enemy, the Devil to be your Tormentor, damned Souls to be your Companions, and Everlasting Fire to be your own Portion ! God will not then repent of the evil, he will not then send his Messengers with glad tidings any more : What will you do in the day of the Lord ? Nahum 1. 5, 6. *The mountains quake at him, the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence ; yea, the world and all that dwell therein ; who can stand before his indignation ? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger ? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.* Have we not some representation of the Terror of the great day , in some greater Thunders that make us tremble, that with their Noise and Lightning, make the Inhabitants of this Earth to be astonisht ? *The voice of the Lord is*
powerful,

powerful, and full of majesty ; the voice of the Lord rends the air, and sends out flames of fire, Psal. 29.4. But what a more terrible season will that be, when we shall hear the Voice of the last Trumpet, saying, *Arise ye dead, and come to judgment :* When the Elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the Sun shall be turned into Darknes, and the Moon into Blood ! When the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and this admired Earth shall be full of Convulsions and Violent Agitations ! when the Seas shall roar, and the Graves open, and the Judge appear in the Clouds ! when you shall hear the Cracks and the Groans of the dissolving world ! where will you sinners hide your heads, what will you then think of the Wrath of God, in that great and that terrible day ? You will then wish, that you had never been born. Oh how happy would you then reckon your selves, might you but go into the Grave again : Oh how happy, if you could but dye ; but it will flye from you ; this is that Hell where the wicked must live, and ever live, tho it be in misery. Oh little do you think what you do when you sin ; you are like a man that should be drinking at the edge of a Furnace, into which he were to be thrown when he had drank a few glasses off : Like a Malefactor that is jolly and merry over-night, and is to be executed the next day. Then you shall see that it shall be well with the Righteous, tho it go ill with you. Judge of things now, as they will appear to be at that day ; join your selves to that Society among which you would then be found : Judge of Religion as it will then appear. Here
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it seems, through the many afflictions and sorrows that attend it, not to be such a lovely thing; but then it will appear in its true Lustre and its fullest Beauty. Here you see many times a true Servant of God brought very low, complaining of his Iniquities; now you hear his Groans, but a moment hence you shall hear his Praises and his Hallelujahs. It is night with him now, but a Moment hence you shall see him Triumph in Eternal day. He is now in a strange land; but shortly he will be with his God at rest in Heaven; and happy is he that gets to such a Blessedness; though he go out with a sad Heart and weeping Eyes, and meet with broken Bones, and many a trembling dispensation in his way thither. What course will you take? Which pattern will you chuse? Will you serve God or your own Lusts? Will you have your portion here, or in the World to come? Will you be content with the present Afflictions of Religion, in hope of Eternal Joy. Consider that they are not to be judged the most happy men, who fare well for a moment, but those that do so for ever. If you serve your Sin, you will have pleasure it may be for a while, but Bitterness and Sorrows in the latter end; your farewell will be very terrible. Will you please your selves for a moment, and venture an eternal Wrath? or will you not rather yield your selves to a Gracious and a Loving God? and then you shall *sow in tears, but you shall reap in joy*; you may feel his anger for a moment, but he will entertain you in his own Kingdom for ever.

Inf. 7. We have no cause to be offended with the prosperity of the Wicked. 'Tis true, the Righteous are now *sowing in tears*, but they shall *reap in joy*: In a little while it shall be the portion of the Ungodly to Mourn and to be Sorrowful. Would you envy a Malefactor that is jovial and pleasant over night? When you know he is to be led to Execution the next day? His approaching Punishment might justly spoil the relish of his own dainties; but however it gives the Spectators no occasion of grudging him his Drunken joys, seeing they are the last that the poor man is ever like to have; and a little space obscures all the gaiety of his looks, with an Everlasting cloud. It is no just objection against the wisdom of the Divine Providence, That the good are afflicted, whilst the Rod of God is not upon the bad. For he gives to the one the Blessings of the right hand, the knowledge of Himself and their own Duty; whilst to the other he only gives the Blessings of the left hand, Riches, and Honour, and the like goods, which being only outward and for this present World, they are not of so great a value as those which are Spiritual, and relate to a life to come. We think it fares well with the Wicked, because we do not for the present see them shed so many Tears, nor complain after so doleful a manner, as the good are often forced to do: But we see not in what chains they are held, nor with how many stinging thoughts their minds are harass'd, all the while they forget God: We see not the perplexities to
which

which they are reduced by the contrary commands of divers Lusts. If we consider, that God is *angry with them every day*, and that we know not but in a day or two, they may be cut off and perish, we shall have no cause to murmur at their present undisturbed Case, and their seeming welfare; for their happiness is not real, but apparent, and all the goods that are bestow'd upon them, are but mean and low in themselves, though our erroneous and blinder Judgments, think them to be somewhat great, and considerable; *Dr. Scots Christian life, part 2. p. 255.* For considering of what little moment the present goods and evils are, which good men suffer, and bad men enjoy; they ought rather to be lookt on as an argument of God's Wisdom, than as an objection against his Providence; for he understands the just value of things, and knows that the best of these worldly goods, are bad enough to be thrown away, upon the worst of men; and so expresses his just scorn of these admired vanities, by scattering them abroad with a careless hand; for why should he partake of the error of vulgar opinion, and express himself so very regardful of these trifles, as to put them in Gold Scales, and weigh them out to mankind by Grains and Scruples? When we see therefore bad men to rejoice, and the good to mourn, let us not censure, but adore that Providence that will assign to them both different portions in another world; those that are healthful, are not more beloved for that; nor are the sick and weak more hateful to God for those outward troubles that they now suffer.

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there are many who have their paradise in this world, that shall have none hereafter; and there is many an one torn and mangled with the thorns and bryers of the Wilderness, to whom God does reserve a Throne above: We see many a Vessel on whom the Sun shines, and which sails with a fair gale, that yet by splitting on a Rock or on the Sand, never reaches the Port: And others we see, that meet with nothing but high waves, and contrary winds, and tho' they have an unpleasant voyage, yet it is, for all that, very safe, and attended with comfort in the latter end: The wicked do not always prosper in this life, God sometimes makes them examples of his Justice; and if he do not usually do so to those that are very bad, it affords us a certain ground for the belief which we have of a Judgment that is to come; wherein punishments and rewards will be distributed after another manner than now they are. This maxim of our Christian Divinity, * That God sometimes afflicts very severely those whom he tenderly loves, even then, when they well perform their duty, even then, when he is well pleased with them, was unknown to the ancient *Isralites*. This was a Lesson above their understanding: God did not afflict them, but when they had provoked him by some particular transgression; but when they did not so, they always had a peaceable and happy life; it is not so with us; our afflictions are sometimes indeed not the marks of his Anger, but of his Favour; as when he calls his own out to the enduring of things very bitter and unpleasant, for the tryal of their patience and

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faith;

* Frag-
mens de
Serm. de
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rus, p. 74:

faith; there is none of the Prophets, that does reckon suffering among the gifts of God, but our Apostle does esteem them to be so, *Phil. 1.* We hear none under the new Testament, which gives us a clearer discovery of another world, say as they did heretofore, *Why doth the way of the Wicked prosper?* but rather count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations.

C H A P. VI.

Of the duty of such as never have been under a sense of God's Wrath and Terrors; and what is the doleful condition of a Soul that apprehends it self to be under his hot displeasure.

1. **S**Eeing God is often angry with his own Servants, what cause have those of you that fear him, to bless him that he is not angry with you, and that you do not feel his displeasure! He sets up others as his mark against which he shoots his Arrows; you hear others groaning for his departure, and yet your hearts are not fadned as theirs are; your eyes can look up towards Heaven with hope, whilst theirs are clouded with a vail of sorrow: He speaks roughly to them, but comfortable words to you; he seems to set himself against them as his enemies, whilst he deals with you as a loving Friend; you see a reviving-smile in his Face, and they can discern nothing there, but one continued and dread-

dreadful Frown. Oh admire and for ever wonder at the Sovereign distinguishing Grace of God ; are you that are at ease better, than many of his people that are now thrown into a fiery Furnace ? Have you less dross than they ? Have they sinned, think you, at an higher rate than you have ever done ? He is angry with them for their luke-warmness, for their backsliding ; and have your hearts always burn'd with Love ? have your feet always kept his way, and not declined ? have you never wandred ? have you never turned aside to the right hand or to the left ? surely you have ; and therefore what a mercy is it, that he is not angry with you, as well as them ! You see many whose Consciences for their sins are turned all into flame and horror and perplexity, full of accusations, full of guilty fears for their sinning, their sinning against Light, Knowledge, Mercy, and Love ; and have you never so sinned ? Have not your Consciences also been defil'd ? Have you never done what was evil, when you knew it to be so ? Have you not been often kindly entertain'd of God, after you have run away from him ? Have you not after great Transgressions met with joy and pleasure in the sense of his pardoning healing Grace, whilst others that have been, it may be, more dutiful, did not fare so well, nor have ever had such a fatted calf killed for them, nor such feasts to refresh their Souls, as there have been prepared for you ? You can never sufficiently bless God for his mercy ; every day you deserve his Anger, and yet you have not been under the terrible apprehensions of it for

a moment. Why are you sitting at his Table, and honoured with his Presence in all your Duties, in all your Sufferings, whilst he is a stranger to them, and as a wayfaring Man that tarries but for a night? What is it that makes him to bless some Children of the Family with greater peace and comfort than he does the rest? Nothing but his own Grace and Mercy. Some are drawn with Cords of Love, and some have their Iniquities constantly visited with Stripes. Some are glad with the hopes of Heaven, and some are afraid they shall never go thither; and know not by experience what Joy and Pleasure means. Some have their spirits overwhelm'd, their whole Souls covered with thick darkness, and their Bones broken, whilst others are at ease, and see the light of his Countenance, and have an unchanged Health. Some travel with weary steps, and make their pilgrimage with their own sorrows to be a vale of tears, whilst others run the way of his Commandments with enlarged hearts. Some Families are filled with Lamentations, and some with songs of Praise: And all this gives us still greater occasions to magnify his Grace and Love, that we have a moments ease; that we can observe one Sabbath, or make one Prayer with hope, deserves our highest thanks and admiration.

Secondly, Do not presume for all this; for tho' he is not angry yet with you, he may be so. This was the fault of David, Psal. 30. 6. *In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved;* but it immediately follows, vers. 7. *Thou didst hide*
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thy face, and I was troubled. The Sun shines now upon you, the Candle of the Lord does refresh your Tabernacle; but you may meet with many Storms, and Clouds, and Darkness, before you come to your journies end. The Disciples were once greatly pleased with the glory of the Transfiguration; and during the delightful interview between Christ, and *Moses*, and *Elias*, they thought themselves as in Heaven; but a cloud came and obscured the preceding glory, and then the poor Men were afraid. 'Tis true, the Anger of God endureth but a moment; but even that moment is very sad, and terrible beyond expression. Weeping endures but for a night; but it may be a very bitter and a doleful night for all that. It is a night like that of the *Egyptians*, when they arose, they saw all their first-born slain, and there was an hideous universal cry and mourning throughout all the Land: So this night of the Anger of the Lord may destroy all our Comforts, and make the first-born of our strength, the confidence and the pleasure of our hopes, to give up the Ghost. Psal. 77. 2, 3, 4. *My Sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelm'd. Thou holdest mine eyes waking. I am so troubled that I cannot speak.* Tho you are at ease to day, and feel no trouble, no disquiet, Are you sure that it shall be so to morrow? Are you sure that you shall never see any frowns in the face of God? Presume not upon the strength of your grace, nor the brightness of your evidence for Salvation; for that may

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languish, and this may be obscured ; and those of you that now think your selves at the door of Heaven, may be brought, for ought you know, to the contrary, to the very Gates of Hell. Tho' God is pleased at the present to deal gently with you, yet your sins may cause him to send his dreadful rebukes upon you ; your Souls lye open and naked to him, *Heb. 4. 13.* and he can make what impressions either of his goodness or his severity he pleases there. Be not secure ; for *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Who can stand when he is angry ? Who can bear his blows ? or what hand can strike so hard a stroak as his ? There are these things in the sense of his Anger, that may prevent your security ; and I will tell you not only what I have seen and heard, but what I have experienced and felt in my own Soul.

1. If you have once a serious and a fixed apprehension of the displeasure of God, no creature can yield you the least comfort ; if you be never so rich, all your Gold cannot purchase one hours Peace and Joy. You may complain indeed to your Friends, and you cannot but complain ; but alas ! they can give you no relief : Their Language is, *Unless the Lord help, we cannot help.* You may go to your Ministers, they may speak kindly to you, but they cannot make their own words to take effect. If the Heavens above you be as Brass, they cannot give you Rain, nor make the Dew of God to fall upon your Branches as it used to do ; they can

can mourn with you, but they cannot wipe your tears away. If you once apprehend that God is angry with you, in vain shall you seek for rest in pleasures, or diversions, or change of Company; for such a stinging thought as this will always pierce you to the quick. *God is mine enemy, and what will these avail?* The sense of his Anger will put even your natural spirits into a strange unquiet agitation, and after this you will not find your very bodies at ease, as they used to be. *Psal. 38. 2. Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore; there is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions, Job 7. 13, 14.* All the Fountains on Earth will never quench your thirst, if the Fountain of Living Waters be shut up. Your Bed will not then be a place of rest, nor your Meat delightful to your taste; your sorrows will keep you waking all the night, and your fears will haunt and pursue you in the day. *My sighing cometh before I eat; and my roarings are poured out like Waters, Job 3. 24.* Your Soul will then abhor all dainty Meat, and your Life will draw nigh unto the Grave; and when you have tired your selves in seeking rest among the creatures, and have found none, you must then sit down, and say by a sad experience, Miserable Comforters are you all; for tho' you run to never so many crowds of quiet people, you can meet with no quietness; as the wounded Hart, tho she run

into the common herd, yet by that means does not lose her pain, but carries her wound with her where ever she goes.

2. Whilest you are under the sense of God's displeasure, you will find no comfort in his Ordinances; every part of his blessed Word, will be as a Sword cutting to your very Soul: You will find every Threat to be as a dart thrown at you; and see every promise that is full of Comfort to others, yet to be as dry to you: That Scripture which was once your delight, will fill you with Gall and Wormwood: That which you once reckoned to be the book of Life, will then seem to be the book of Death; and you will be afraid to read there, for fear of reading your own Condemnation: So great a change does the sense of God's displeasure make: Those Assemblies that were once your joy, will then be terrible to you. I go not (says the troubled Soul) there to meet a friend as I used to do, but to see an Enemy: To see others joyfully serving God and singing of his Praise, whilst I am silent with deep Affliction, and can only Mourn whilst they Rejoyce. What pleasure is it to see others feasting at his Table, whilst my Sins have destroyed my appetite, and there is not one crumb of the bread of Life that belongs to me? I pray, and he *shuts out my cry*, regards not my entreaties, does not ease my distress, nor seems to relent with all my Groans. I have Sinned against him, and I dare not say, My God, and my Father, any more: I have lost all my Fervor, and all my Confidence, and all my hope in Prayer.

Prayer. I go round the streets to seek him that was once my beloved: Help me all ye Servants of the Lord to find my God again; but for my former undervaluing of his Presence, he is now departed, and I find him not. Woe! Woe is me! what have I done? Woe is me, that I have lost him, whom to lose is Hell.

3. All this will be attended with great anguish of Spirit, and with great Tribulation.

Job 16. 12, 13, I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark, &c.

Then all our Sins are brought fresh into our minds, with a new and a cutting remembrance, as if they had all been committed but as Yesterday: They rank themselves in order; every one of them being set before us, give us a new stab and a wound, to encrease the fore and the pain of our former wounds: They present themselves with all their hideous Aggravations, against what Mercy, what Goodness, what checks of Conscience, and what Warnings, and what motions of the Blessed Spirit they were committed: And who can bear so terrible a sight as this? *Job 13. 26. Thou writest bitter things against me; and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth, i.e.* 1. Always to think upon them. 2. To feel pain and smart in that Remembrance. 3. To be astonisht with my guilt and fears. Then all our thoughts of God himself are uneasy: We can think of nothing but his Greatness, his Majesty, his Justice and Holiness. How does it overwhelm us to think what

what a powerful God we have against us. It troubles us to think that he is displeased, and yet we know that he is justly so. If God were for me, says the *troubled soul*, I would bear any pains, and wait, and hope; but He who only can help me, is gone away. He who alone could speak peace, seems to take no notice of the sadness of my case: My Sins have taken my God away, and what have I more? And when we are set on fire with the sense of his Wrath, the more we think, the more we are distressed; every thought returns with sad tidings, and pours oyl into the flame. And what that anguish is, which we feel when we continually think of a displeased God; There is nothing on Earth that does resemble, neither are any words capable of expressing it. We do then smell the Fire and Brimstone of the Infernal pit; then a man may say with *David*, *The sorrows of death compass me, and the pains of bell gat hold upon me: Psal. 116. 3.* And I think that these Spiritual terrours are of the same kind with those which they feel who are now in Hell; only they differ in the degree and in the duration. For a Sinner under the sense of God's displeasure and, in terror for his Sin, is, as if he were in a burning Oven, or in scalding Oyl; he is every way beset, and every way tormented. Trouble of Conscience indeed is a flighter thing; but the sense of wrath kindled there, is vastly terrible; 'tis the suburbs of destruction, 'tis the noisom smell of the bottomless Pit. *Job 6. 4. The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.* The Terrors of God do
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set themselves against me ; whatsoever he thought of, which way soever he turned himself, he saw nothing but what filled him with amazement. Ps. 88. 16. *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me : thy terrors have cut me off.*

4. *That which these troubled Souls are afflicted with, is the fear they have that this displeasure will be Eternal : this is implied in that, Is his mercy clean gone, will he be favourable no more ?* Ps. 77. 7. So the Church Lam. 3. 18 : *My strength and my hope is perisht from the Lord.* So Psal. 88. 5. *I am free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the Grave, whom thou remembrest no more,* And that sickness is grievous to us when we have no hope of being better : That wrath is not to be born, which we think to be forerunner of eternal wrath ; and thus does the troubled soul argue : God has withdrawn himself, and it may be will never return again ; I have lost him for the present ; and Oh ! What will become of me, should I lose such a God for ever ? I have now no beams of light, and what if I go hence into outer darkness ? What if my lot and portion should fall among those that are abhorred of the Lord ? Have I once tasted how good he was ? and must I lose henceforth all the pleasant sense of his Mercy ? Must not Christ be my Saviour, nor Heaven my home after all this ? Oh ! what shall I do ! where shall I appear, should he say at last, Depart from me, for I know thee not ? Shall I be placed at the left hand of Christ ? shall I after all that I have read and heard, after all my profession, strivings, and my prayers, be shut

shut out of that Kingdom, when others shall enter in? How shall I bear so great a disappointment? How shall I dwell with everlasting burnings?

III. If you have not yet been under the apprehension of Gods displeasure, take warning by those that are so; dare not to venture upon any sin, when you behold their grief and their sorrows for their Iniquities. You see their tears; you hear their lamentable groans; you see that nothing in this world is refreshing or comfortable to them: and will you hug the Serpent that has stung them, and made them to cry out in the *bitterness of their Souls*? Oh stop where you are, go no further, lest you fall into the depths, lest the Fire that scorches them, begin to seize on you, lest the God whom they account their Enemy, begin also to frown on you; learn obedience by their Stroaks, lest you also be made to feel the smarting Rod. You see how those that once were as chearful, as pleasant, and as little afraid as you, are now cast down, and troubled, and perplexed, and cannot be merry as they used to be: The sense of God's displeasure has untuned their Harps, that they cannot sing the Songs of Zion. You see how their Pleasure and their Hope is shipwrackt; beware lest you run upon the same Rock; for the doing so, after the sight of their example, will make you to be guilty of a double Crime; first of doing ill, and then in doing it after such a warning as their sorrows gave you. *Job* says he was set up as a mark, ch. 7. 20. And so are others in the like case;

case: They now receive the shots of that Justice which they have provoked; but if their punishment do not make us to humble our selves, and to repent, we may be set in their place, and it will render the Wounds we shall then receive, more poisonous and malignant, for not having taken and improved the warning that was given us by them before. Be you drawn by his Goodness and his gentle Methods, that you may never know what his severe displeasure is: For God has further ends in long and terrible afflictions, than the Correction, or the Good of the Person so afflicted: They are a part of his Government of the World, and he has a regard to the Welfare of the Publick, in that which seems to relate only to us. *Deut. 17. 13. All the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.*

IV. Beware of provoking God; dread the beginnings of his Wrath; *if his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that trust in him, Psal. 2. 12. Who so provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul, Prov. 20. 2.* And in such a case, the evil spirits have a power given them to molest and trouble us with their impure suggestions, and with strange and unaccountable fears, *Psal. 78. 49. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.* And in that unhappy moment, when our sin has stirred up his Wrath, there is nothing in Heaven or in Earth but what will range it self on the part of God against us; and the Devil himself will then take the

the same part, not out of Love to God, but out of Revenge to us, to execute the Designs of his Justice; and all the world will be so far from yielding us the least shelter from his Wrath, that it trembles at it. Psal. 18. 13, 14, 15. Pl. 104. 32. *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke: all the proud helpers stoop under him.* What Minister can speak Peace to such a Soul, when the God of Peace will not? His Ambassadors cannot go upon a reviving Message, unless they be charged with it by their Lord and Master: If he make the Heavens to be as Brass, all the Fountains of Waters will be dried up: *The spirit of a man will indeed bear his infirmities*, i. e. his bodily weakness and his pain, for a little while; but if he be followed with Breach upon Breach, and more heavy Crosses press upon the former lighter Evils, then his Spirit and his Courage will begin to fail; but no briskness of Temper, no strength of Nature, no liveliness of Spirits can stand before one spark of the Wrath of God; they cannot shut their eyes that they should not see it; they cannot sleep, that they may forget it; they cannot lose the sting that afflicts them, with all the diversions and the pleasures in the world; the sense of Guilt will haunt and pursue them where-ever they go.

V. Strive to be safe from the Eternal wrath of God; from that wrath which will not be for a moment, but for ever. If his wrath here make his Servants a Terror to themselves and to others, what terror will the damned have, when

when they are compassed about with pure and unmingled wrath, that is more hot and scorching than all the Eruptions of it here on Earth? Whilst you see but a small Cloud, the least intimations of his Displeasure, seek to make your peace with God, through Jesus Christ, lest on a sudden, Ruin and Desolation fall upon your heads; lest if you stay a little longer, you have no time, no space wherein to repent. Oh how can you fold your arms, and be at ease, if the Great God of all the world be your Enemy! and you know not but the next day, the next hour, or the next minute, his Arrows may be shot against you. Job 36. 18. *Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.* The withdrawing of the Favour and the Love of God, the least Eclipses of his shining Light, are very terrible; but Oh how much more dreadful would it be, should you fall into the terrors of an Eternal Night! You can no way escape his Justice, Psal. 139. 8. Betake your selves to God, whilst he is treating with you for your good; and tho his Justice fright you for your guilt, yet upon your humble Submissions, his Mercy will relieve you. It is he alone through Christ, with whom you have chiefly to do. His Anger will pursue you wherever you go, unless you meet him with humble and repenting Tears, and plead the Blood of Jesus; and this will quench that Fire that has already begun to flame; your Salvation is concerned, your souls are in danger, therefore make the most earnest applications to God, that he may be merciful to

to you, ere it be too late. If I could tell you, that there is a person that designs to fire the House in which you live, and gave you clear information of the Time, I need not after this perswade you to be watchful; the love that you have to your own safety, would oblige you to prevent his purpose. This is what I cannot acquaint you with; but I can tell you of that which is more formidable; The Devil is laying a Train to destroy your Peace, your Comfort, and your Hope: Seek you to countermine his malicious Design, lest he betray you to danger, whilst you think there is none at all.

VI. Speak kindly and compassionately to those whom you perceive to be under the sense of God's Anger. *Job* complains, *ch. 19. 2. How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces?* And as men that have been long used to pore upon their troubles, he tells them how often they had vexed him, *v. 3. These ten times have ye reproached me; ye are not ashamed that ye make your selves strange to me.* 'Tis very likely they did not designedly vex him with their words; for being good men, they could not be so extremely barbarous; they made good Sermons, but a very sorry and mistaken Application. It is easie to trample upon those with sharp and cutting Speeches, whom God and their Sorrows have already thrown into the mire: It is easie for those that are in no trouble, to silence and upbraid those that are: As *Job* says to *Eliphaz*, *Shall vain words have an end? I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my souls stead; I could*
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heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my Lips should assuage your grief. When any of your Friends are under spiritual trouble, you must carefully abstain from any passionate or fowre word or action that may increase their grief; it will be some small help to them to see that you pity them, tho' you cannot give them relief. Use all the compassionate and the kind words to them that you can, and seek to bind up their sores with a gentle hand; beware of using the least favour of sharpness and reproach and scorn, for these will, as they did to Job, vex their Souls more, and they will be evil in you, as well as unpleasant to them. Hence is that complaint, *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none: they gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink, Psal. 69. 20. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud, Ps. 123. 4.* But above all, abhor the thought of the least inward delight from their miseries. Obad. 12. *Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Job 19. 28. Ye should say, why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is in him?* Roughness and severity is not the way to help such as are troubled and cast down; and he had need be learn-

ed that speaks a word in season to the weary, Isa. 50. 4. The rarity of such a one is expressed, Job 33. 23. *If there be an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness.* Those that under the Characters of Ambassadors of the Gospel of Peace, do nothing but thunder out the Law to a wounded and a troubled Soul, shew they are unlike to the Jesus whom they would seem to represent; and they shew that they have in such matters very little skill, and no experience at all; neither do such do as they would be done by in the like case. There is a sort of balsome in compassionate and gentle words; tho' they do not fully perform a Cure upon our wounds, yet they make the pain and the smart less; whereas a rough and four carriage does exasperate and heighten them, and is but the pouring of oyl into the flame.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

Shewing what is to be done by those that think God is angry with them. And first of Prayer, as a principal help against their trouble. And some Objections of tempted persons answered.

I Am now to make application to those who are under an apprehension of God's Anger: There are no people in the World whose case does require a greater pity; and to whose relief we should be more forward to contribute all that we are able. While we are at liberty, their poor Souls are under the bondage of an overwhelming fear. That God whom we serve with hope, is terrible to them; in those Ordinances, and that Sabbath which yield sweetness and refreshment to us, they find no delight, because the Comforter that should uphold their Souls, is departed from them; if on a journey we saw any person wounded, and mourning under his bleeding wounds, and crying out for help, the compassion that is fixed in humane Nature would move us to assist him, and not to pass by and suffer him to groan under the smart of so deplorable a condition; and much more should we be ready to help our fellow-creatures in a Case that is far more sad and dreadful, such as is this now before us. There are a great many at this very time, who are complaining that they have no hope, no

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prospect of deliverance from their present miseries and afflictions; that tell us, They are cast off by God; that he has forsaken them; that their Sins are set in order before them; and that they are afraid the God, whom they once thought their own God, will be favourable no more. Oh! how little do we know what we do, when we sin? It is easie for a moment, it yields us a little superficial transient delight; but it leaves a woful sting, and a lasting bitterness behind. Oh! what would such poor creatures give, that they had never sinned? or that they had never sinned so wilfully, so frequently against that God whom they once experienced to be very good and gracious, but whom they now find to be very severe, and very terrible? They cannot look below, but they think that Hell is opening its mouth to swallow them up; they cannot look above, but they see the great Creator of Heaven and Earth to be as an Enemy to them; And who can stand before thoughts so cutting and overwhelming as these are? Now this being a condition which I was in my self not long ago, and from which the Mighty Grace of God has been pleased to save me; I desire to give all the help I can to such dejected and trembling Souls; and none among us, but perhaps may at one time or other fall into such depths as these; therefore I hope the following directions may be of some use or other: I beg of you that are at ease now, to regard these things; for if you fall so low, the anguish and bitterness of your spirits will not allow you to give such a distinct and careful attention to what shall

shall be spoken to you then, as you now may.

First, If you are under the sense of God's Anger for your sin, *pray earnestly to him*, to turn his Wrath away: We usually deprecate War, and Famine, and the Plague, and those other mischiefs which by the evils they bring upon our bodies are very formidable to us; but this sense of the Divine Displeasure has something in it that is more formidable, for it brings an unspeakable load of trouble on the Soul, and wounds that part of our selves which is capable of having either a very pure and noble joy, or a very piercing grief and sadness: A man that is sunk under a burthen that is too heavy for him to bear, cannot but groan to be at ease. Thus Psal. 6. 1, 2, 3. *O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure; have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed; but thou, O Lord, how long? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies sake.* These are the breathings of one sensible of a great and a violent distress; and tell us, that even our weakness, and our helpless condition, is an argument that we may plead with God: As here, *Have mercy upon me, for I am weak*, q. d. Thy Goodness, thy Glory, and Power, will be rendred more illustrious, in giving some relief to one so desolate, and so low as I am. But I know what poor trembling Souls will be ready to reply, and

Object 1. Alas, I cannot pray ; the Spirit that should warm my Soul, and kindle my Desires, does not move upon me as he used to do : I grieved and vexed him heretofore, and now he has left me to grieve and to vex alone. I am so troubled, that I know not what to speak ; and when I endeavour to do it, I find no Fervour, no Life at all ; my Prayers are grown very troublesome and uneasie to me.

Ans. I grant you, this is a case sad enough ; it is sad for creatures so miserable, and so full of wants as we are, not to be able to pour out our Supplications before the Lord ; and it is more sad, when our sins have made the Spirit, that only can teach us how to pray, to retire : but there are some Considerations that may support us even in so sad a case as this. 1. Our Distress teaches us the Folly of our Sin, and causes us to hate that which has cost us so very dear ; and it is well for us that we see the odiousness of it, tho it be smart and pain that opens our eyes : 'Tis better to be wounded in order to a cure, than to dye at ease, and so to perish for evermore. 2. The Spirit is not so withdrawn, but that he will return, upon our earnest addresses for his Grace : He hovers still about us ; and tho we did ill to shut him out before, yet this blessed Guest does but wait for a favourable opportunity to do us good again : He is not quite gone ; that sense which we have of Sin, is his own work. 3. Our indisposition to the Duty of Prayer, is no sign that we are void of Life : A bed-ridden Person lives, as well as one that is

in his firm and pleasant Health; a groan is a sign of Life, as well as laughter, and a merry Song: It is very undesirable indeed, to have such a feeble and decaying life; but the way to make it more strong, is to keep our Souls in exercise; and the weak and creeping motion wherewith we stirred at first, being continued, will enable us to tread with a more steady foot, and we shall get several Paces further in a very little while. By praying, tho it be in a very poor manner, we shall learn to pray: Tho we do but sigh after God, yet even a sigh may a little ease us; and by frequent use, be turned into a loud and prevailing Cry. God is still your Creator; and he that hears the Ravens and the young Lions when they roar for meat, will not be deaf to you. 4. 'Tis a more excellent state of Soul, to pray to God, and to persevere in it, when you have no Comfort, than when you have. Sensible Consolation is a very desirable thing: 'Tis as the Dew of Heaven; as Manna coming thence; like Honey or the Honey-Comb, very pleasant to the taste: But a Dependance and Trust in God, when he is a withdrawing-God, is one of the most glorious Acts of Faith; and if it be not treated with Feasts and splendid Entertainments here, I can assure you, nay God himself has assur'd you, That it shall fare very well in the next world: Sensible Consolation may be in the inferior nature, as the *Mystical People* call it, it may be occasioned by the Temper of the Body, by the Harmony of the Passions, or the agreeable Dispositions of the Natural Spirits; but those

other less pleasant acts, are seated in the highest Region of the Soul, in the Understanding and the Will, and upon that account are more truly Spiritual, and more abiding. 5. Those poor troubled people that complain of their deadness and incapacity to manage the Duty of Prayer, ought to consider what an influence their fears have had upon their bodies ; fear does naturally contract and dull the heart ; the motions of it are weak and languid ; despairing thoughts and apprehensions about our Everlasting State, dry up our moisture, and by cutting off our hopes, make every thing that was pleasant to us, to wither away ; and 'tis a very hard matter for the Soul to retain its heat and warmth, when its dear Companion the body does not assist it as it used to do ; when the Spirits with which it serves it self in so many several actions, are stagnated into a feeble, and almost undiscerned motion. Some great Saints there have been, who by a sort of Holy *Anteperistasis*, have glowed in their hearts with a quicker Flame to God, when all has been cold and storm round about them : Some there have been, who have never had more inward Health, than when their outward man decayed ; and whose souls seem'd manifestly to thrive, when their bodies were mouldring away ; but, generally speaking, the Neighbourhood, or the nearness of a sickly body, proves a great clog and hindrance to the mind ; and there is no question, but God will make allowances for our weakness ; and the groaning after him by one under the power of a Disease, may be as grateful to him, as a long continued Prayer by one

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one in Health: Pray therefore to God, tho it be with heaviness, tho it be mingled with many a bitter sigh, yet it will be a payment of that homage which you owe to God; and you know not how soon you may meet with a gracious return. You may kneel down in sorrow, and he may lift you up with Joy, and say, *Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*: And I know that would be very welcome and pleasant news to you; the news of a Kingdom to be your own, would not be half so refreshing.

Obj. 2. It is not for me to pray; I am Sinner enough already, God knows; and would you have me aggravate my Guilt? for I have wandering Thoughts, and an unbelieving heart: I am a wicked person, and the *prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 28. 9. And therefore to what purpose should I pray? If any man indeed break with contempt the Laws of God, and then think to make satisfaction by his Prayers, and an outward or a pompous Devotion, he offers an affront to the All-knowing God; and his holy Eye cannot look upon an Action so criminal, without the greatest disdain and scorn. If a man will Swear, and Curse, and Damn himself with one breath, and then desire God to bless him with the next; this would be a ridiculous Pretence to Religion; and such are like to find severe Punishment from that God, whom they abuse with so shameless a Confidence, and of whom they speak with so little Reverence. If a man should desire of God to help him to rob, to plunder, or to
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wrong his Neighbours, this were, as far as he could, to make the Holy One of *Israel* a partner in his Crimes. If a man should kill another unjustly, and glut himself with Revenge, and then, as some have exprest it, say Grace over his bloody Banquet, this were to commit a double Wickedness. It was an abominable thing when so many harmless Protestants were so barbarously Butcher'd in *France*, to sing *Te Deum* at *Rome*, for the Massacring so many poor Creatures; as if the God of Mercy had been Cruel as well as they; as if the Rage that came from Hell, had descended from the God of Love: As if a man that lives at the Prince's Charge, and is maintained at his Table, should break the most Venerable Laws of his Kingdom, and then thank the Prince for giving him a power to do that which he knows he detests and hates. There is no question, but it is the Duty of a wicked man to pray to God. I suppose there is none thinks *Simon Magus* a very good man, and yet he was exhorted, even when he was in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity, to pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him, *Acts* 8. 22. If you think your selves wicked, there is nothing more your Duty, than to beg the Grace of God; to strive, to knock, to call upon him whilst he may be found; but beware that you do not think that some failings even in some considerable Duties, are a sign of your total Apostacy: Unbelief is in the best, but not indeed in its reigning Power: Strive as much as you can, and then bewail your weakness, and implore the help of God, and he will be favourable to you.

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Obj. 3. 'Tis true, I know 'tis my Duty to pray; and I have prayed for several Months, and for several Years, and I have still the same Diseases, and the same Fears that I ever had. I have no less pain in my Body, no less disquietness in my Soul, than I had the first moment that I began to pray: *He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out; he hath made my chain heavy; also when I cry, and shout, he shutteth out my prayer, Lam. 3. 8.* I am just like *Saul*, when he enquired of the Lord, *1 Sam. 28. 6. The Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by Prophets.* He would have no Communication with him, take no notice of what he did: Even in such a case am I: I enquire after him in his Ordinances, but have no news of his Gracious Presence there: In Tears I pour out my Soul day and night, and pray; but my Prayers that I send up to Heaven, bring to my poor weary Soul no tidings of Comfort, or of Peace, back again: mine eyes fail with looking up, my heart faints, and I can hold out no longer in a Duty wherein I find no delight, and which brings me no advantage; why should I wait upon the Lord any longer?

Ans. This I think to be one of the greatest Temptations wherewith Satan does assault troubled Souls: He knows well, that if they once quit their hold of God, they fall into his hands, they lengthen out his Chain, and whet his Malice, and come within his reach: And there is no Duty which the Devil hates more than Prayer;

er ; for it has many a time defeated his Designs, and made his Kingdom shake : Therefore I earnestly desire you, as you love your Souls, as you would not dishonour God, nor gratify the Devil, that you would never give it over ; tho you do but chatter like a Crane, yet 'tis better than to be altogether silent ; tho you do but mourn after God, 'tis better than to resolve to let him go : Tho you can but say, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner* : Tho you can but smite upon your breast, and look up to Heaven, tho you can but creep in his ways, 'tis better than to leave them ; tho you can but speak a word or two in Prayer, 'tis much better than not to pray at all. Oh what a terrible thing is it to leave calling upon God, to give our selves for lost, to say it is vain, when nothing is too hard to do for Almighty Power, and for Infinite Goodness ; and woe unto us when we quit the Rock of Ages, and commit our selves unto the Waves ; what sorrows do we then meet withal, and how low do we sink ? How intolerable is it to have the rebukes of our Conscience, the upbraidings of Satan, the guilt of Sin, the fear of Hell, and to have no God to whom we can go with hope ; do not suffer the greatness of your Evils to deprive you of that support which is to be found in the performance of this Duty ; tho you have not a present answer to what you desire, yet it no way follows, that your Prayers are not heard : God knows better than you, what will be the most proper season in which to bestow the Mercy that you think to be most necessary : His delays in this kind are no sign of his abhorrence ; He may
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suffer us to fall into very great Agonies, that so like our Lord in the Garden, we may pray more earnestly ; and our Requests are not vain, tho we have no dawnings of a near and immediate deliverance. The Prayers of the Primitive Church for Kings and all in Authority, were answered many years afterwards, when *Constantine* was converted to the Faith : Beware of fainting under the hand of God ; and yet when we can look upon him only as an Enemy, 'tis almost impossible not to faint : Under smart and sore troubles, we must frequently look up to God, and beg his strength ; and seeing in such a case we cannot perform any long or very regular duties, we must often renew, tho it be the very same desires, *Psal.* 142. 4, 5. *Epb.* 6. 18. And to this purpose consider,

1. There is none besides God himself, can help you ; and this should cause you to persevere in Prayer : His hand alone can heal the Wounds ; 'Tis common for the troubled Soul to say, Oh what would I give for one Beam of Hope ! I would give all the world, if I had it, for one pleasant Sight of the Face of God : It is not so to be obtained ; not by bare wishes, nor by the purchase of any thing that is so low and contemptible as is all that which is in the world : When the Heavens are brass, none can cause the Rain to fall ; when the Sun is set, not all the artificial Fires which the skill of man can make, will yield so large and so pleasant a light unto this Earth as he did ; his return chases the darkness, and brings to us the welcome day. In a distrust of your own weakness, have recourse

course to this God, and say wth *David*, *Psal.* 51. 12, 17. It must be the Act of a Power that is Omnipotent, to give you comfort; not all the Angels in Heaven, nor all the men on earth, can help you, unless he be pleased to do it. As you contribute nothing to your first Regeneration; as the thing created does nothing to bring it self into Being, only receives from the Creator's Power and Goodness what he is pleased to give; expect not overmuch from the most knowing Ministers, or from your dearest friends, they are but Cisterns, which can yield no water to quench your thirst, unless they be filled with Water by the Clouds of Heaven: As to the satisfaction and the quiet of a Troubled soul, *all men are vanity*; and it is an uncommunicable Privilege of the Divine Nature, certainly and infallibly to relieve the miserable, *Isa.* 57. 19. Other friends either know not your wants, or by their own Poverty, or their distance, are not in a capacity to supply them: But God is always near, always full of Goodness, and is acquainted with whatsoever we need or do expect: If all the world were your Friends, and he your Enemy, the Gaiety of their Looks, the Pleasure of their Smiles, would not take away the Terror of his Frowns; the threatening Cloud would hang over your heads, and fright you with its dreadful Prefages, wherever you went; and on the contrary, if all the people in the world were your Enemies, and he your Friend, his Love would sweeten all their Hatred; his Voice would still all their Clamours; his Arm would fence off all their Blows; and under the

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Wings of his Providence you might lye down and sleep in peace: He can save you when you have destroyed your selves; when you have run to the very door and the gates of Hell, he can pull you back: When you are even dying, he can strengthen and revive you: 'Tis with him that you have principally to do; to him must you therefore pray, because from him alone can your help come: When *Adam* had committed sin, he was afraid, and took no pleasure even in Paradise, tho (as one says) the Sun shined upon his head with as gentle and refreshing Beams; the Rivers ran as clear as before, the Birds sung with as Melodious a Voite, the Flowers had as fragrant a smell, the Herbs were cloathed with as fresh a Verdure, and all the Fruits flourished as before; but from the poor man Peace and Innocence was fled away; all without was calm, but he found a tempest rising in his own Breast, which he knew not how to lay. Those of us that have by woful experience felt the Terrors of the Lord, know that all the advices of our Friends, all their Arguings and Discourses, all their Entreaties and their Prayers, gave us no manner of ease, till God Himself was pleased to command Salvation for us. Job 34. 29. *When he giveth quietness, who can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who can then behold him? whether it be done against a nation or a man only?* The greater are our Distresses, the more fervent should our Prayers be; and when the Winds are highest, and the Storms encrease, and threaten us with Shipwrack and with Ruine, the nearness and the greatness of our danger,

danger, must cause us with more speed to arise and call upon our God. Therefore though you have the sense of his displeasure, yet say, there is none can help me but God himself, there is none can heal my diseases, or forgive my sins, but he; therefore as long as I live, will I pray, and call upon him till he have Mercy upon me.

Secondly, Tho you are under the sense of God's Anger, you have encouragement to pray, from many Promises, and from the Office and the Name of Christ: That Mediator that well remembers what he felt, when he groaned under his Father's Wrath, knows also with what Flames your Souls are scorched: With a most compassionate eye does he look upon you, and will awake to promote your Safety, if you do but say as the poor frightened Disciples, *Master save us, or else we perish.* 'Tis true, he is attended with Illustrious Spirits, some of which were never thus sick, and others whom he has fully cured; but in the Throng of his Admiring Courtiers, in the midst of their Chearful and pleasant Hallelujahs, his Heart is concerned for you, and his Ears will be open to your Cry; his Intercession gives you good ground of hope; he ever lives to manage that glorious and honourable Work; and having an unchangeable Priesthood, *he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him,* Heb. 7. 25. To the uttermost, is, as one observes, (Dr. Goodwin, *Triumph of Faith from Christ's Intercession*, p. 199.) a good word, and put in for our Comfort. For

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(says he) let thy soul be set upon the highest mount that ever any creature was yet set upon, and that it is enlarged to take in and view the most spacious Prospect both of Sin and Misery, and difficulties of being saved, that ever yet any poor humbled soul did cast within it self; yea join to these all the objections and hindrances of thy Salvation, that the heart of man can suppose or invent against it self; lift up thy eyes, and look to the utmost thou canst see, and Christ by his Intercession is able to save thee beyond the Horizon and furthest compass of thy Thoughts, even to the utmost and the worst case the heart of man can suppose. Cry often to God, Oh pity me, a poor helpless sinner, for the sake of Christ; he bore thy wrath, turn it away from me, for I am not able to bear it. The Name of Jesus carries Comfort and Salvation with it: He is a perfect Saviour in every time of need: The Name of Jesus Christ tells you, that his Office is to do good to the miserable, to heal the diseased, to open the eyes of the blind, *to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,* Isa. 61. 1. You are to pray in that name which was celebrated by all the Patriarchs and Holy Men of old, by the Prophets and by the Priests under the Law, tho it was then wrapt up in obscure Types and Representations; that Name in which God himself delights; at which the Angels bow with Reverence, and at which the Devils tremble; that Name which is great in Heaven and Earth, in which you were baptized,

and in which you must place all your hopes ; in this you may implore assistance in all your wants ; and this may furnish you with an holy confidence ; for 'tis the Name of the Son of God, of his entirely Beloved Son ; and it would be a Reproach to this Great and Venerable Name, to pray with distrustful thoughts. Oh let this be a support to you, that you may have access to God by this Name, which has been dear to all the Faithful, and must be so to you ; and which has been the refuge of many a poor trembling Soul. This is the Name which the Saints of God have mentioned in all their straits, with great delight ; of which they were pleased frequently to hear and to speak, and which was the Joy of their Hearts, and for which they refused not to suffer Death. Some have taken the pains to observe, that it is mentioned in the Epistles of *Paul*, 220 times, and often in the Gospel of *John* ; so sweet, so dear to them was the Name of *Jesus*. This is the first General way of Relief, that they who are under the sense of God's Anger ought to take, viz. To Pray unto him: So *Jer.* 10. 24. *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment ; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* *Psal.* 39. 10. *Remove thy stroke away from me, for I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.* *Psal.* 85. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Psal.* 38. 21, 22. *Psal.* 138. 3. *Psal.* 143. 2.

C H A P. VIII.

Of Faith in Christ, as another Help under the sense of God's Displeasure: And the several tendencies it hath to calm an afflicted Soul under long and sore Tryals.

S*econd General.* When you are under the sense of God's Anger for your Sins, act Faith upon God and Christ. Faith, I may well say, is the Mother of all the Graces; it conceives and brings them forth, and takes care to promote their growth; it contributes Life to them at the first, and causes them to thrive and flourish afterwards; with this our meaner Services meet with a chearful and a favourable acceptance; and without it, not all the most pompous Devotions, not all the most tedious and painful Mortifications that we could ever practise, would be of any value in the sight of God. What mighty things has this produc'd? What miraculous Triumphs did it gain? And no History can furnish us with an account of so many great and illustrious Heroes, of so many difficulties, and so great Victories, as the *XIth* of the *Hebrews* furnishes us withal: Not one mentioned there, but met with great Troubles; not one there, but overcame them; and 'tis always expressed, *By Faith* they did this or that: To the most, Faith does appear to be an easie thing,

having not seen their sins in their odiousness and their aggravations; having not much thought of the Holiness, and Justice, and Majesty of God, and of the Spiritual Law that pierces into all the depths and recesses of the Soul: They think it a small matter; but to a poor sinner that is under the Rebukes of God, and of his own Conscience, that is awakened with terrible Threats, and amazing Fears; that sees vast multitudes of sins within, and Hell without, there is nothing more difficult: For thus he argues; Can an holy God bear with so vile a Sinner? Can he forgive so many and so great Iniquities? Will he be gracious to one that has been so much his Enemy as I have been? Will that Love ever be shewed to me, which I have so much slighted and undervalued, and for my Contempt of which, God knows I now pay very dear? Will the Great Ruler of Heaven and Earth be favourable to a Worm? Will he admit a Rebel to his Presence and his Glory? It is not easie to satisfy a mind that is struggling with those manifold Objections which carnal Reason, and Sense, and a man's own heart set themselves against with so much seeming strength and force. But now there are several ways by which this so much opposed Faith does prevail, and obtain a Conquest over so subtle and plausible Enemies as these are.

III. Faith quiets the Soul, by directing it to consider the Nature, the Promise, and the Word of God; it takes away the fowreness of our Thoughts, whereby we are apt to conclude that
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God is of a furious and implacable Nature; that he will never be reconciled, or have to do with Creatures so mean and so sinful as we are. This discovers to us the Terms of his Covenant, the free Offers of his Mercy, *Isa. 27. 4, 5. Fury is not in me; who would set the thorns and bryars against me in battel? I would go through them; I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* His Strength, i.e. the Holy Properties of his Nature, his Goodness, his Unchangeableness, his Faithfulness, which he has graciously revealed with a design thereby to support our Hearts: Faith guides us to the view of his Promises, to the Truth and Authority of the Promiser, to his All-sufficiency, and his readiness to Pardon and to Save: And this indeed is hardly to be entertained: To think that when we are under the apprehensions of his Wrath, that he is ready to forgive: For if I may judg of others by my self, 'tis not so much his Power that we then question, as his Goodness; not so much, whether he *can*, for that we know well enough, but whether he *will* give us Help: Now Faith leads our trembling Souls to the Promises, which are the voluntary Engagements of God, whereby he has obliged himself to do us good; which are the product of his Love, and which convey a quickning power and virtue to the Soul: it shews us also the foundation on which all these Promises rely, even that Jesus Christ, in whom they are all *Yea and Amen*, i. e. very certain and very true; and he is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever, *Heb. 13. 8.* Faith makes us hum-

ble, and consequently patient ; it empties the Soul of all proud and lofty thoughts ; it sees that it has nothing of its own whereon to trust, and therefore depends on God alone ; it discovers his Relations as a Creator, as a Father ; and produces acts in the mind suitable to these comfortable Titles, *Psal. 42. 11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* Suitably to that in *Isa. 50. 10. Who is among you that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. i. e.* If he be without any reviving sense of the Love of God, any sight of his own Grace, and I may add, without any hope of Deliverance and Salvation ; for the least hope carries with it some light, tho it be very feeble, and almost undiscerned : Now for a man to cast his Anchor in the dark, and to trust when he hath no visible foundation for his Faith, is a work of labour and of difficulty. The Name of God in this case, is a great relief ; and that Name is proclaimed, *24 Exod. 4. 5. The Lord God, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant, &c.* So that as *Dr. Goodwin* says, *Child of Light*, p. 126. When a poor Soul in distress is not able to say, I see such or such signs, or any evidence in my self, whereby I can conclude, That God is my God, or Christ my Saviour ; tho I know nothing by my self whereby I can challenge any present Interest ; yet because *Grace and Mercy* is his Name, and *our Righteousness* his Son's Name, therefore I do cast my self upon both for Pardon

don and Favour ; thereupon my Soul relies, stays, and abides, and from these it will not be driven. Two things concur to this Trust ; first, that there is Free Grace, Good Will, and Mercy in God, and that Jesus Christ is appointed and made to be our Righteousness. And 2^{dly}, That I am capable of, and may come to have an Interest in both these ; and that tho there be nothing in me which may challenge an interest in them, yet there is nothing that excludes me ; whereupon I cast my self upon God for both, and there rest.

2. Faith will greatly help us, as it gives us a right understanding in the nature of those long and severe Afflictions, whereby we are apt to conclude, That God is angry with us ; it will shew us, that there is nothing in them new or strange ; it will carry our minds beyond the present smart, and shew light beyond the darkest Cloud ; It will teach us to judge of God, not by that which is present, but by that which is to come ; not by what we feel, but according to his own promise ; it will shew us by a delightful manifestation, the period and conclusion of God's Design, and cause us not to judg of his works by the first rough, and less amiable draught. Faith will shew us, That Anger and Love may very well consist together ; and that the ruder blows that make us groan and sigh, may be to polish and to fit us for his Heavenly Temple. This will hold us up, when our sense is puzzled, and our feet are like to slide ; it sets before our eyes not only the first

corrections, that are painful to the flesh, but the end of the Lord, *and that he is* (Jam. 5. 11.) *very pitiful, and of tender mercy*: It shews us the Justice and Equity of God's proceedings, that there is nothing in them but what is highly reasonable and necessary, even when they seem to be severe: That they are needful to keep us from wandering, and to prevent our sleeping the sleep of Death: And that those heavy Crosses that tire and weary our Spirits, may be sent to promote our Eternal Rest: And that the deepness of our Groans here, may cause us hereafter to sing louder Hallelujahs.

3. Faith will greatly help us, as it both discovers and fortifies us against the Power of Satan and his Wiles, tho these designs of his are invisible, and so very little known, and yet the more dangerous for being so. In those doleful Troubles that I my self have experienced; in all those terrible Reflections, and overwhelming Fears, I was not sensible of any Agency of Evil Spirits, but that all my Thoughts and my Fears were the product of my own mind; though I am now apt to believe, That some of those strange Thoughts that I now and then had of God, and those sudden Terrors that pierced my Soul, must have had in them something of the Cruelty and Malice of Satan, they were so very terrible. I do verily believe, That people do *very much wrong both the Devil and melancholly people*, in calling the unavoidable

voidable effects of their disease, the temptations of Satan; and the Language of that disease, a compliance with them: They do both ascribe to the Devil a greater power than he hath, and vex the diseased person more than they need to do: For tho' I do not question, but that Evil Spirit; through the permission of God, is the Cause of many painful sicknesses that come upon our Bodies; yet there are also many such that are the result of a disordered motion of the natural Spirits, and in which he hath nothing at all to do. But as 'tis the Common Custom of Cruel, and Barbarous persons, to set upon the weak, and to trample on those that are already thrown down; so 'tis very frequent for the Devil to take occasion from our bodily indispositions, to attack and molest our Spirits, which are bereaved even of that force which they used to have, when the House in which they dwelt was at ease, and free from those disabilities that they are always under at such seasons: For 'tis then night with us, and in the night those Beasts of prey do range abroad, which kept their dens during the brightness of the day; but however it be, whatsoever agency there is of Evil Spirits in our troubles, either upon our understandings, our passions, or our imaginations, this Grace of Faith will unveil their designs, and baffle all their Stratagems. Ephes. 6. 16. *Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of Satan.* And that this is so very necessary, appears by Luke 22. 31, 32. *Satan hath desired to winnow you as wheat; but I have*

have prayed that thy faith fail not. There is nothing against which that Engineer of Hell levels his Batteries with a greater fury; there is nothing can lay us open to greater danger, than either downright unbelief, or the weakness of our Faith. And Faith not exercised, is like Weapons of War lying by us, they rust, and are no way serviceable. For whilst this remains in exercise, we persevere in our Watch; and the God, whom it shews us looking on, comes to our assistance in every time of need; as also does that Redeemer who has Conquered the Devil by his Death and Resurrection, and at whose glorious name those Evil Spirits tremble and are afraid.

IV. Faith will greatly help us under the apprehensions of God's displeasure, as it leads us to the consideration of Christ as Crucified. See *Dr. Owen, on Psal. 130. p. 279.* It is easie indeed, to learn the notion of Faith; but a thing of more difficulty to experience the efficacy and the power of it: For a Man to have a sight of that within him, which would condemn him, and for which he is troubled, and at the same time to have a discovery of that without, which will justify him, and to rejoyce therein, is that which he is not led unto, but by Faith in the mystery of the Gospel. If we pore upon our own Qualifications, Duties, Evidences, and the like, we shall, by a continued circulation of uneasie thoughts, but increase our own trouble; the imperfection and the faultiness of all that we have done, or are able to do, will fill our minds

minds with perplexity and distress; the Holiness and the Spirituality of the Law of God will kill our most forward hopes: Our best way therefore is not to sit still, where we are bewailing our miseries, and the sadness of our Case; but to arise, and to run to the City of Refuge that is before us; when we are wounded with the sense of Sin, with our weeping eyes and with our grieved hearts to look up to Christ, of whom the Brazen Serpent was a Type: When the burthen of our iniquities sinks us down, and makes us groan, we must go to him, in whom the weary and the heavy-laden find rest. To that Gospel, which as it reveals and manifests abundance of Sin in us, does at the same time manifest Righteousness in Christ; while the one terrifies us with the fear of Hell, the other will refresh us with the hope of Heaven. The Blood of Jesus does extinguish the Wrath of God; and as it does make us safe, it does also make us holy, for it cleanses from all iniquity: This is the shelter and the healing of a Soul that is in danger and diseased. How many Souls have cast their Anchor in the dark, when all comfort has fail'd them for many days; and have obtained support and relief, by saying, That if they perish'd, they would perish at the feet of Christ. And he that is the Lamb of God, so full of meekness and of pity, is too gracious to let any perish there. As a Priest he died for his Enemies: He is a meek King; tho' he be upon a Throne of Majesty, and a place of Joy and Glory, yet he will admit mourners into his presence.

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He is a King of poor and afflicted persons, and a Prince of Peace; and as he hath Beams of Majesty, so he hath Bowels of Compassion. What Mercy may we not expect from so gracious a Mediator, that took our Nature on him, that he might be Gracious? Let us therefore go to God by Christ, who has satisfied his Justice by his Death; and who, without him, is to us Sinners as a consuming fire; Let us go boldly to his Throne, in the name of Jesus, and we shall find that the God of whom we were afraid, will become our Friend; and we shall experience him to be better to us than we ever thought he would have been. Our unbelieving hearts, whilst they are such, will be full of darkness and of trouble; but upon our Faith, the Storm will cease, and the Morning will begin to dawn upon us; and instead of that wrath which we feared, and had deserved, we shall find there is Mercy with the Lord, and plenteous Redemption, *Psal. 130.* The first thing that a convinced awakened sinner thinks of, is his own danger, and how he may avoid the Wrath of God, and what it is that he must do in order to it; now it is not to be accomplished by pompous, ceremonious Services, not by external mortifications, not by offering the fruit of his Body for the sin of his own Soul; but by Faith in Jesus Christ and his Death, by the means of which God is become propitious and favourable to us. And the first view that as (one says) an humble Soul is to take of Christ, is, of his being a Saviour, as made a Sin and a Curse, and obeying to the death.

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And Christ must be considered, not only with respect to the Excellencies of his person; but as cloathed with his Garments of Blood, and the Qualifications of a Mediator and a Reconciler; and this renders him the fit object of a Sinners Faith. If we think of God, without thinking of Christ, he is vastly terrible and amazing to us; but in and through him, those otherwise-overwhelming apprehensions become very pleasant and comfortable to us. Let us honour the Love that he hath shewed in him with admiring thoughts, and never have low, nor mean apprehensions of his Grace. Christ is near unto God, and pitiful to us; able to help us, and most willing to do so; for those that come unto him, he will in no wise cast out. He will not upbraid us for our former follies; he will not encrease our grief; but when he sees us once lying at his feet, and washing them with the tears of an unfeigned humiliation, he will raise us up, and bid us be of good cheer.

V. Faith will remove the troubles that we have from the sense of God's displeasure, by conveying to us that life and strength from Christ, which will enable us to subdue all our spiritual Enemies, *Phil. 4. 13.* It will bring him to us; and when he is in our Vessel, let the Waves threaten us with never so formidable a noise, we are sure not to be cast away: And all the Spectres that fright us, will vanish, if we do but hear him once say, as to his Disciples, *It is I, be not afraid.* This Grace will
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unite us to Christ, and communicate to us of his Power in the several measures that we need; and without his assistance, long and sore afflictions will tire our Spirits, and destroy our Hope. He is necessary for us; for he has a perfect knowledge of our Enemies, of their Force, their Policies, and their Designs; He has by his own Combat learn'd to Fight, and by his Experience can teach us to get the Victory; neither the multitude, nor violence, nor obstinacy of our Enemies, can hinder the Success, and the glory of his Triumph. Col. 1. 11. *He prayeth that they might be strengthened with all might*; because as we have to do with divers Enemies, and are sick of divers Infirmities, we have need to receive not one or two kinds of strength, but many different ones: * For as in nature you see the strength of Bodies is different, one resisting one thing, and yielding to another; one has the virtue to repulse the force of one Element, but not to guard it self from another: So in a manner is it in the Souls of Men; such a Man will free himself from the temptation of one sin, that will not be able to defend himself from another; such a Man will resist the temptations of prosperity, whom adversity will overthrow; such an one will bear troubles for a while, whom the length or tediousness of them will overcome; and if one of our Spiritual Enemies succeed against us, we are undone for ever: Therefore, as the Apostle says, we have need to have recourse to Christ, who can furnish us with skill and strength, to defeat whatsoever stands in the way

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way of our Peace, or our Salvation. To have one on our side that has returned from the Field of Battel as a Conqueror, is a mighty encouragement and privilege : Such is our Lord, he is a Victorious and a Triumphant Saviour, he will not leave his Conquests incomplete, for he goes on Conquering and to Conquer ; and the glory of his enterprizes has not fill'd him with disdain or contempt of the poor and needy ; for he that is the King of *Zion*, is, as I said before, a meek and lowly King. By Faith in Christ we obtain his Spirit, which by opening our eyes, will shew us that Fountain of Living-waters, where we may both quench our thirst, and wash away our filth. This Spirit will take away the sting of guilt, and sweeten the Cross that was very bitter to us ; and when our Lord is come to help us, when we know that he is afflicted in our affliction, that yolk which gall'd us before, will become as an Ornament about our Necks ; and when we have the pardon of our sins, and the hope of God's acceptance, that affliction that we thought a burthen too heavy for us to bear, will become light and easie to us. *Out of the devourer shall come forth sweetness.* From those very fears that overwhelmed us, shall spring glorious hopes ; and those hearts which a slavish fear of the Wrath had contracted, shall be enlarged with a sense of his Goodness and his Love ; and we shall not look upon him as an Enemy, but as a Friend ; not as a Judge, but as a Father. *Isa. 33. 24. The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their ini-*

iniquities. Alas! when God leaves us, the smallest danger terrifies us, the least Dart of Satan makes an Impression on our spirits; the least trouble sinks such low, such inconsiderable creatures are we: But if the Lord be with us, if Christ be on our side, neither the Law, nor Sin, nor Death can hinder us from bidding a defiance to all that is against us, 2 Cor. 15. 56, 57.

VI. Faith will give us relief under the apprehensions of God's displeasure for our Sin, as it will shew us the period and conclusion of those miseries which we now are groaning under; our Sense will tell us, that our Troubles are tedious and very long; but our Faith will rectify our Judgment, and shew us, that tho' we have been, in heaviness, yet it is but for a season; our Sense makes us think our night of weeping very long; but Faith sets the morning before our eyes: And indeed, when that comes, the time of sorrow will appear to have been very short; our Weeping will bear no proportion with our Joy; nor our Groans with our Hallelujahs: The luster of our Crown, and the glories of our Triumph, will make us to forget the Blood, and Sweat, and Labour of the Combat, tho' whilst here below we thought it hard. Faith will wipe away our Tears, and cause us to take a further prospect, and to see where they now are that were mourners once as well as we. *Job* is no more wondred at upon a Dunghil by his Friends, but shining with glory in the Highest Heaven. *Heman* is

no more distracted with terrors; but infinitely pleased with the sight and enjoyment of his God. There is *Asaph* also singing praises to him, tho' he thought, and was afraid that his Mercies were clean gone, and that he would be favourable no more. Faith will solace your drooping spirits, by causing you frequently to remember, that tho' God is angry, yet it is but for a moment; and that tho' you have now four Grapes, yet they are only to prepare you for a better relish of the Joys above; it is this that sets our feet upon a Rock, and produces in our fainting Souls a secret support and hope, that tho' it be night with us for the present, yet that it will not always be so. *Rev. 3. 21.* *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father on his throne.* The dangers and distresses on the way, will make us better to like our home. All the years of our Life, tho' spent in sore afflictions and anxieties, will be but a very little space, when we are Landed at our haven of Joy and Immortality.

C H A P. IX.

Of the direct Acts of Faith, as the most suitable to a distressed Soul; as also of waiting upon God: With several considerations to enforce it. And that a Person in great Affliction, ought to hope that it may be better with him.

T*Hird General.* Look forward to Jesus Christ, when you find things perplex'd and troubled in your own souls; and indeed, in the direct Acts of Faith, we have nobler objects to converse withal than when we look and pore upon our guilty selves; when we look into our troubled hearts, we can see nothing besides confusion and disorder there; but we may at the same time discern an al sufficient fulness in God and Christ to relieve our wants. It is a long and a tedious work to consider by the several steps by which we are to proceed in such a Case, whether we have believed or not; our Duty is at this very instant to believe, *i. e.* under a penitent sense of what we have done amiss, to look unto Christ for help. We must carefully distinguish between Justification and Sanctification; between those habits and those holy actions that are the effects of Faith, and Faith it self. Our Sanctification is full of imperfection; but that Righteousness of Christ, wherein alone we are to trust for acceptance with God, is compleat and perfect. These are things

things to be considered by people under spiritual distress; but if you be under *the disease of Melancholly* to any great degree, I am sensible, that neither this, nor any other direction will be altogether available. It is such a stubborn and obstinate disease, that it is not to be overcome by rational methods and perswasion, no more than a broken Bone can be set again by words and talk. 'Tis only God that is fully acquainted with the Nature and Violence of this worst of Distempers; 'tis his Power and his Grace alone that can chase it away; and all those things that depend upon consideration, and that may succeed in other Cases, have not the same tendency to good in this, because it is our disease always to pore and think, and it is our misery that we cannot think to any purpose. I beseech you to remember, that the foundation of all our Peace and Comfort is Christ alone, and Faith in him; Mortification, Self-denial, and other Graces, are the superstructure that is laid upon it; but truly all that we can do in great and deep affliction, and sore distresses of Soul, is only to look up to Christ as a poor wounded bleeding Man does look and cry to one that passes on the Road for help; and our Saviour and our Physician is so compassionate, that he will regard us, tho' we are able to say little more than this, *Have mercy on us, thou son of David.* Under the prospect of our great infirmities, and of the manifold imperfections of our Duties, and under the sense of our own nothingness and unworthiness, let us humbly betake our selves to

Christ, he will not disdain, nor slight our approaches to him, nor leave them unattended with some manifestations of reviving Grace and Mercy.

IV. When you have done all this, you must wait till the Lord appear to your relief and help. Psal. 123. 2: *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.* Tho' his strokes be very smart, yet we are sure that we have deserved them; tho' his delays of help be tedious, yet we have merited at his hands a much longer delay: We are as so many poor Slaves indeed, under the bondage of our fears and our troubles; but alas! we have brought our selves to that slavery, and we must look unto God till he set us free again; and tho' our Master be angry with us, yet he is a Master still; and that relation that we have to him, that Interest which we have in his Covenant, may be somewhat supporting and comfortable to us; 'tis a more easie thing to bear any trouble that continues for a Week, or for a Month, and then passes away; but this will be the tryal of our Faith, if we can maintain our dependance and trust in God when he afflicts us very sore for many Months or Years together: If we see no sign of help, no prospect of deliverance, we are still to wait till the time, even the set time to favour us be come; and this must be done with patience, with a silent and a quiet

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resignation to his Will ; it is the product of a calm and a quiet Soul that is satisfied in the Justice of Providence, tho' it be severe ; only with this limitation, that you have the freedom and the command of your natural spirits ; for if they be put into a hurry and confusion by a disease, then indeed you can neither perform this nor any other spiritual action with calmness and deliberation ; but in other Cases, where the disorder of the spirits is not so great and violent, *He that believes, makes not haste*, Isa. 28. 16. is not furious and precipitant ; and indeed it is our common fault that we would have the help of God to come just when we will, to be eased as soon as ever we find our selves in pain ; to get to Heaven immediately when we find our selves no longer fit for service here on Earth, and to have an unpainful and easie passage thither ; but God that is not so tender of our Flesh as of our Spirits, will suffer us long to be in trouble, that all may know by their own feeling, how evil and how bitter a thing it is to sin, and that by the methods that please us least, he may do us the most good ; and by our temporal inconveniencies promote our eternal welfare. We ought in patience, in an humble and a quiet silence to possess our souls, and to approve of all the dispensations and the works of God ; for how it is possible for us not to manifest our sense of grief, even in doleful expressions, I know not : When a Man is under a burthen that he cannot bear, or when he is in sharp pain, 'tis natural for him to groan and to sigh ; 'tis a thing which he cannot help. It

would be, as I have intimated before, a need-
 less labour, to advise people under great affli-
 ction, and spiritual distress, not to complain;
 for say what we will, they cannot but com-
 plain: Can a Man think God his Enemy, and
 his Soul in danger, and Hell like to be his por-
 tion? Can he see his Comforts wither, and his
 Hopes expire, and others at ease, while he is
 in wo and trouble, and not be greatly con-
 cerned? or be so, and not express his concern
 for the sadness of his Case? Blame not people
 that are under *the Terrors of the Lord*, for com-
 plaining; if your souls were embittered with
 Wormwood and Gall, you would complain as
 much as they. Can they be silent, when they
 think that God is departed from them? and as
 they fear, departed for ever? Can they be in so
 terrible calamity, as quiet, and as much un-
 moved as when they were at ease? Our blessed
 Lord himself, in the days of his flesh, when
 his suffering encreased upon him, *offered up*
prayers with strong crying and tears, Heb. 5. 7.
 And in the pain of his inexpressible agonies on
 the Cross, he cryed out with a loud voice, *My*
God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt. 27.
 46. And Psal. 32. 3. *When I kept silence, my*
bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
 And he assigns the Reason of it in Verse 4. *For*
day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moi-
sture is turned into the drought of summer, Selah.
 There are some natural, unavoidable expressi-
 ons of grief and sorrow which are consistent
 with that waiting and dependance upon God,
 which I have mentioned before; nor is it con-
 trary

trary to this waiting, to desire a speedy and a quick delivertance; you may lawfully pray for it: For which we have several instances, as Psal. 22. 19. *Be not thou far from me, O Lord; O my strength, haste thee to help me.* Psal. 31. 2. *Bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedily.* Psal. 69. 17. *Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble, hear me speedily.* And so Psal. 102. 2. Psal. 40. 17. *Make no tarrying, O my God.* You may in imitation of so great examples, frame your requests after this or the like manner; but if, when you have done so, relief does not immediately come, if your distress and your anguish remain, you must be content still to wait, and to justify your Maker in his delays, and in his proceedings towards you, tho' they be very terrible; as in Psal. 22. 1, 2, 3. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent: But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel.* Those that aver Religion to be in all respects an easie thing, know not what they say; did they know what it were to be under the sense of God's displeasure, and under violent, painful distempers for many Months together, and yet to wait and to be satisfied with that Providence that thinks fit to continue on them long pains, and terrible fears, they would find it is not such an easie matter to be truly Religious. But that you that are exercised with severe and sharp Tryals, may arrive to this excellent disposition of being able still to wait on God.

Conf. I. How long has God waited upon you! How long did he knock at your doors! How did he entreat, and beseech, and call to you, ere you let him in! How did he follow you from day to day, and from Sabbath to Sabbath! How did he wait for your Repentance one year after another, doubling and renewing his expostulations with you, saying as to *Jerusalem*, Jer. 13. last. *Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?* And if you denied to hear the Calls of the Great God for so long a space, Can you think it hard that he does not grant a present answer to your Prayers? Would you have help on a sudden, when you made the *Eternal* wait for your hearts so very long? He waited on us to do us good, when we ran from him, when we spent our Thoughts, our Strength, our Lives, and our Time in vain; after all our rebellious, our undutifulness and disobedience, he moved upon our souls by his Spirit; he excited us to mind our Interest, and gave us space wherein to repent. Let us remember these things to humble us, and to encrease our patience, and to keep us from thinking it strange, if God, even for a long time delay his help.

Conf. II. The Sovereignty, the Greatness, and the Wisdom of God: We are his own, and he may do what he will with us; being his creatures, he may cause us to serve to whatsoever purposes he pleases; and his Wisdom will guide even our miseries to make them useful to others, tho' they be sharp and severe to us; his ways are far above us; his

his Greatness and his Glory being so far above our thoughts, the most suitable temper of a creature towards so great a God, is to be silent, and to wait, to see what a period Infinite Wisdom will at length put to those Dispensations of his Providence, which are so dismal and so terrible to us: If all our Comforts that we have in this world, all that we most valued and esteemed, be taken from us; if our Afflictions be long and tedious, and accompanied with such stinging particularities as have scarcely been mingled with the Crosses of others that have gone before us. God may do what he will with us; we can have nothing to say to him, because we are the work of his own hands. Our hearts in sore distresses are apt to say, Why are we so much and so long afflicted? Why are we compassed with such terrible Calamities, when others are at ease, that to appearance have sinned as much as we? But these first risings of Murmuring and Disquiet, are to be resisted by the considerations of the Majesty and the Greatness of God; who may put his Creatures to what use he pleases, and so as may, tho with their own smart, promote the good of others, and their own final good. Tho *Job*, as Mr. Charnock observes, *Discourse on the Attributes*, pag. 781. were a pattern of Patience, yet he had deep Tinctures of Impatience; he often complains of God's usage of him, as too hard, and stands much upon his own Integrity; but when God comes, in the latter Chapters of that Book, to justify his carriage towards him, he chargeth him not as a Criminal,

nal, but considers him only as his Vassal; he might have found flaw enough in *Job's* carriage, and corruption enough in *Job's* Nature, to have cleared the Equity of his Proceedings as a Judge; but he useth no other medium to convince him, but the Greatness of his Majesty, the Unlimitedness of his Sovereignty, which so appales the good man, that he puts his finger on his mouth, and stands mute with a self-aborrancy before him as a Sovereign, rather than a Judge. His Wisdom also, that makes the Night to precede the Day, and Storms to clear the Air, and make way for a fairer Season, ought to silence and pacifie our Souls, *Isa. 30. 18.* *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.* He knows the fittest times and seasons wherein to heal our Diseases, to remove our Fears, and to do us good.

Conf. III. How great the Mercies are that we are to wait for; 'tis for Heaven and Glory, and we have his Promise, That our Faith and our Patience shall not be in vain, *Isa. 35. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* And after all the dangers, the snares, and hindrances, and temptations of this world, to come to Salvation at the last, is so great a Mercy, that it is surely worth staying for: Tho we labour Six days, yet the rest of the Sabbath does refresh our Spirits; and so will after the sufferings of this mortal Life, that Eternal Sabbath that is to be kept above with God, give us great Refreshment;

freshment ; our time on earth is a season wherein by several Trials and Afflictions to prepare us for that Happiness and Glory : As the Night does affright us, the Morning will surely bring us Joy : It is but a little while, and our Lord will come and save us : Let us not surrender our selves to our Spiritual Enemies, tho we are straitly press'd ; for our Saviour is marching to our Relief. Jam. 5. 7. *Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter Rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* The Husbandman gives not his Grain for lost, tho it be covered with Snow and Storm ; he expects to see it rise with the returning Spring ; so neither should we despair of finding Comfort, tho the Prayers that we have made, bring us no present satisfaction ; You know *David* had the promise of a Kingdom, but what strange Difficulties did he meet withal ? And what a long time was it, before he came to sit upon a Peaceful Throne ? We must have Conflicts before we get the Victory ; we must run our Race, and strive hard, ere we get the Reward ; but when it shall once be bestowed upon us, it will abundantly recompence us for all our Tears, and all our Heaviness ; we are to take up our Cross daily ; every day on earth will afford us cause of Patience ; we are to watch, for all our time is but as a moment to Eternity : Let not our Lord, that will bless us with a long and unspeakable Felicity, have cause to say to us, as he did to his sorrowful Disciples, *Could ye not watch with me one hour ?*
Mat.

Mat. 26. 40. He looks on, knows our weakness, and will give us help; he could immediately solace, and refresh, and save us if he would; but seeing that he is not pleased so to do, let us humbly be silent, and acquiesce in the Wisdom of his Appointment and Decree; for tho he delay, he is not unmindful of our sorrows; and in the very Minute that is most for his Glory, and for our Good, he will come and save us.

Isa. 64. 4. For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

V. Entertain a secret hope, that it will not always be thus sad and dismal with you. Tho you have made several Prayers that have not yet received a Gracious Answer of Peace; yet pray still, and be not discouraged, but like blind *Bartimeus*, cry the more earnestly: You know that the Woman of *Canaan* persevered in her attendance on our Lord, tho the words he spake seemed to have in them a great deal of sharpness and severity; yet she was resolved not to leave him, nor be denied; and at the last, our Saviour commended highly that Faith, of which he seem'd to take no notice before. *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait to see the salvation of God, Lam. 3. 27.* The reason whereof is alledged, *v. 31, 32. For the Lord will not cast off for ever; but tho he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.* Tho every thing that you look upon within your own hearts, terrifie and perplex your thoughts,

thoughts, yet the vastness of that Mercy that is in God, and which through his Son he is willing to communicate to you, may afford you support and relief; the very possibility of help, tho never so remote, may a little quiet and calm your souls; for tho you see nothing for the present, but Frowns and Anger in the Face of God; yet you cannot, you ought not to say, that it will never shine again; tho his strokes are increased, and every day more painful than they were the day before, yet you must not then conclude, That he who chastens for your profit, will not lay aside the Rod: Tho you are sinking with your fears, and you have no power left, yet lay hold on the strength of God, he will not strike off your trembling hand, but encourage your dependance and your trust in him; you are not everlastingly perisht, you have not yet received your final doom, it is possible that you may escape. There is great comfort in a *May be I shall be saved, even tho by fire; tho more in this, I fully believe I shall be so; As Zeph. 2. 3. It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Joel 2. 13, 14. Who knows but he will return, and leave a Blessing?* Tho you are afflicted and tost with Tempests, and not comforted, yet there is a prospect of a quiet shore. Christ is not far off with his pleasant and reviving Consolations: Hold out a little longer, and your expectation shall not be in vain; length of pain, and continuance of sorrow, does tire and spend the natural spirits; and long attendance upon God, without any manifestation of his appearance for our help, dulls our motions,

tions, enervates our souls, strikes off the Wheels of our Chariots, and greatly tempts us to despair, and to say, Because he does not help us, that he never will. Jer. 8. 18. *When I would comfort my self against my sorrow, my heart fainteth within me; for the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not delivered.* But let us hope still; for when we are at the lowest, then is the proper season for God to work; we are indeed altogether desolate, but in him there is compleat and suitable Salvation; it is an honour that we give to his promise when we believe it, and rely upon it when all things seem flatly to oppose our Faith, Isa. 8. 17. *I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him,* Psal. 27. 13, 14. When we let our hope go, we pull up the sluice, we deluge our selves with Miseries and Calamities that are inexpressible; tho that God that raises the dead, does many times after long despair, give our departed hopes a Resurrection, and makes our broken bones to rejoice: So very merciful and so good is he.

C H A P. X.

Shewing, that People under great Trouble and Anguish of Soul, are not to look for Assurance, or great Joy on a sudden; but as far as they can, to enquire into the Reasons of God's Displeasure towards them, and to look up to him through the Great Mediator; and not further to provoke him: As also how they may know when Afflictions are sent in Wrath, and when in Love.

VI. **W**Hen you are under the sense of the Anger of God, do not look for assurance and great triumphs of Soul on a sudden; if you have supports, 'tis a great matter; thoas Mr. Bayne used to say, You do not know what Spiritual Festivities and Jubilation means. If you have daily bread to maintain your Life, 'tis what you ought thankfully to acknowledge, tho your Tables be not covered wth Dainties, and tho you do not fare deliciously every day: They were but Three of the Disciples whom our Lord admitted to the sight of his Glorious Transfiguration; he does not treat all his Followers with the same Dishes, with the same Joys and Transports: We are sufficiently privileged, if we are in the Verge of his Family, if we are adopted, tho there be several that are great-

greater Favourites than we, and whom he is pleased to set at his Right Hand, and on his Left. He may chuse whom he will, to be his beloved Disciples, to whom he will manifest more of his Presence and his Love, and an extraordinary Care: Do not think, that because you have read of some that have had Heaven to meet them with Angelical Triumphs and Consolations, that therefore you must drink as full draughts of the same Rivers of Pleasure, or that they will follow you as much as them in this Wilderness. Some of the Eminent Servants of Christ, that have been very laborious and useful, that have been remarkable for their Patience, their Faith, and their Self-denial, have been blest with a nearer access to God, and have seen more of the Lord of Hosts in his Glory; but it is enough for such unprofitable Servants, and such great Sinners as we have been, that we look for the Promised Land: Tho we have not many Clusters of the Grapes of Paradise, to cheer us on the way, our Master uses us very well, if he do not turn us out of doors; tho we fare not so well as others do, it is a Mercy that we have but the Crumbs that fall from his Table. This advice is needful, because if we look for extraordinary Joy and Delight, and then find it not after long waiting, we shall be ready to give over our work, when we do not receive that Pay, in the hope of which we flattered our selves a long time. Because some in a Transport, after long Desertion, and sore Tryals, and after long Absence of Christ, have cryed out, *He is come,*

be

he is come, oh he is now come, whom I longed to see.
 Now Salvation is come to my house: Now I am
 fully satisfied; now I am content to dye. Oh
 the Riches, the Depths, the Greatness of the
 Grace of God! Now I see that my Fears were
 too great, my Thoughts of him too low. I see
 that he that inhabits Eternity, even the Great
 Jehovah, will deal familiarly with the Sons of
 Men. I could not have thought, that ever I, that
 was so faint, should be revived; that I, that
 was so full of Despair, should be full of Hope;
 that I who was so near Hell, should be brought
 to the Gates of Heaven; but my own experi-
 ence now tells me, that so it is. Cant. 2. 3, 4.

*I sate down under his shadow with great delight, and
 his fruit was sweet to my taste; he brought me to the
 banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*

This is the language of those whom the King
 of Heaven delights to honour: These are the
 Golden Vessels which he fills with the Oyl of
 Gladness: These are the *Elijahs* to whom he
 sends his Chariots of Fire to convey them home.
 But this is not the Lot of all his Subjects; this
 is not what we are certainly to expect; if we
 go to Heaven, tho by Dispensations that have in
 them a great deal of Cloud and Darknes, yet
 it will be very well for us; if we believe, we
 shall be safe; tho some there be that with *Simeon*
 embrace their Saviour in their Arms, and see
 his Salvation before they dye, for the sight of
 which we must stay till after death; the great-
 est part of Believers have a comfortable, and re-
 viving hope through Grace that they shall come
 to Heaven; but few there are that are so well

assured of it, as to have no remaining doubts and fears: But notwithstanding what I have said, we must endeavour to work out our Salvation, and by a diligence in good works, and holy duties, to strive that we may be among the blessed number of these excellent Saints, whom God is pleased to clothe with the Garments of Praise and Joy: The passionate feelings of Joy are not essential to Holiness; tho when they are bestowed, they do greatly quicken our obedience, and enlarge our hearts. If we resolutely adhere to God, he will give us what will be sufficient for us: Our very fears shall encrease our comfort afterwards; by the way in which we did least expect it, shall Joy and Pleasure come as the Ravens, greedy Creatures, brought meat unto the Prophet.

Vid. Caryl. in loc.

VII. Enquire into the Causes of God's Anger; he is never angry, as I have said before, but when there is very great reason, when we force him to be so: What is that accursed thing in our hearts, or in our lives, for which God hides his face, and frowns upon us? What particular disobedience to his Commands is it, for which he has taken up the Rod? Job 10. 2. *I will say unto God, Do not condemn me, shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. q. d.* Lord, my Troubles and my Sorrows are very well known. Every Eye beholds my Calamity, every Ear is astonished with the report of my sore distress; and all that know me, or have heard of me, wonder why I am, above all others in the world, made so miserable a man, that there has not been

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been an example of the like great and strange affliction since the beginning of the world. I my self, that feel these wonderful sorrows, am most of all perplext; shew me for what, and why it is, that I should be so: He was an upright man; and not being conscious either of secret allowed sin, or open Transgression, might be at a great loss to know the cause of his affliction; but for the most part of us, who are as far from the Grace which he had in his Trouble, as we are from the Riches which he had in his Prosperity; we may soon know that God is angry for our sin; and yet at the same time we must not cease to be solicitous to know what are the particular sins that have made him to tear us up by the roots, to throw us down as with a whirlwind; what it is that has made him to be so long angry with us, and so long to delay his help, that if any evil be undiscovered in our souls, we may lament it with a seasonable grief, and get a pardon for it. It is not the common Course of God's Providence, to cover his Servants with so thick a darkness as that is, which our Troubled Souls labour under in the day, or rather in the night of his Displeasure: And therefore we may with Humility desire to know why he proceeds with us in a way that is so singular; for it is some way delightful to the Understanding, to pierce into the Reasons and the Causes of things. Psal. 74. 1. *O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine Anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?* How angry soever he be, we must make our Addresses to him; and seeing to be cast off, to

be separated from him, is a thing so terrible, he allows us to enquire into the Reasons of his Proceedings, and to debate the Case; and our debate must end in Prayer and Supplication; as here, v. 2. and tho it be very true, that when a man is fallen into a Pit, the business of the poor man is not to inquire how he fell thither, but how he may be drawn up again, and escape the danger that has overtaken him; yet in this case of the sense of God's Displeasure, the knowledge of the Causes of it may produce many good effects, which tho they do not appear in our depths and troubles, yet will shew themselves afterwards; they will cause us for ever to dread the same things which did bring upon us so many miseries. As suppose in another case, a Mother that brings forth Children to the Grave, that only views them a while, and after all the pain of bringing them forth, and after all the care of their future welfare, sees them one after another snatcht away, to know the Reason of this so terrible a stroke, will greatly support her spirit; as suppose it be to wean her from Terrestrial Comforts, and to give her those that are Eternal; to take her Children away, and to give her more of God; to bury her dear Off-spring, that her declining Graces may have a Resurrection, or that her Comfort in the Living, may be more sensible to her when there are so many dead: This will calm her soul, and make even a disconsolate Mother to rejoice. Thus when a man is exercised with long and sharp Sicknes and Affliction, to know the Causes of it, may be useful to promote his Humilia-
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tion at the present, and to make him avoid the like for the time to come, if he do recover.

VIII. When you are under a sense of God's Displeasure, flye to his Mercy and his Grace in Christ: When your Creator is angry, 'tis not any thing in this world can give you relief, but himself; flye from God, as absolutely considered in his Greatness, Justice, Holiness, and Majesty; to him, as discovering himself through the Mediator: The Hills and the Mountains cannot be a shelter from his Wrath; whither can you go from his Presence? Whither will not the sense of his Anger, and your own guilty thoughts pursue you? Betake your selves to him, and when you think of him, think of him as a God, in whom there is the greatest Tenderness and Pity, and of which all the Compassion that is in humane nature, is but a weak resemblance; as it is all one with him in Temporal Deliverances, to save by many or by few; for what dangers can resist Omnipotence? so 'tis as easie with him to forgive a Thousand thousand Sins, as one sin: If we be never so unworthy and so vile, yet Mercy seeks no other qualification of its object, but that 'tis necessitous, and obnoxious to ruin; and it is a good way to flye to his meer grace and mercy; for we have undone our selves. Poring upon our selves does but encrease our load; we are apt to say in our distress, Were we so and so mortified to the world, were our hearts so purified and cleansed, then we might approach him with some boldness, who is altogether ho-

Dr. Owen
in Psal.
130. p. 221.

ly ; this is true, but yet we must first ask of him to make us such, in whom he may delight : And as we sorrowfully cast our eyes upon our wounds and our miseries, let us look at the same time to that Physician who has provided a Remedy for us by Christ, and who can heal all our backslidings, and teach us to apply that Remedy : If we are the worst and the most sinful Creatures upon earth, yet is a Saviour tendered to our acceptance, and our choice ; and if we will receive him, all our Transgressions, how heinous soever, will be blotted out. As we have a very deep sense of Hell and Destruction, so let us have the most enlarged thoughts of the pardoning Grace of God ; and to this we are encouraged by the discoveries that he hath made of himself, through his dear Son : His Forgiveness is like himself ; it is (as one says) an Object for Faith alone, which can rest in that which it cannot comprehend ; and were not Forgiveness in God, somewhat beyond what men could imagine, no flesh could be saved. Isa. 55. 88. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord ; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* It is not the manner of men, to pass by multiplied Transgressions, as he doth : The consideration of his Infinite Mercy removes all those obstructions, which our unbelief, viewing the greatness and aggravations of our sins, throws in the way ; and tho our sins have been every way inexcusable, and do upon every reflection that we make upon them, fright and trouble

trouble us, yet the Mercy of a God surely will yield us some relief; for there is no other reason why he does good to this or that sinner, but his own Grace, *Hos. 3. 4.* He freely chuses, justifies, adopts, and renews the Souls of his Elect; 'tis all, not from their merit, or from any thing that he foresaw in them, but from the good pleasure of his will, *Eph. 1. 5.* All that he does for them, all that he will do for them to Eternity, will be to the *praise and glory of his own grace.* This is the true way to humble us, when we see nothing in our selves, but what exposes us to misery; and that is true Gospel Obedience which is the fruit and product of his Love shed abroad in our hearts. This is the only Rock whereon we are to build our Comfort, when the Storm comes. This *Free Grace of God*, is that which the Saints admire on earth, which revives their drooping spirits, and which they will wonder at for ever. 'Tis a shelter from the accusations and the malicious insultings of the Devil; for tho he set our sins, with all their overwhelming circumstances before us; tho we cannot deny the charge, and believe that we are miserable in our selves; yet do we resolve to flye to the Mercy and the Love of God in Christ: We should disparage the Excellencies of his Nature, and the Offers of his Goodness, if we did not lay hold upon them: And this is that which some call a natural Novatianism in the timorous Consciences of Convinced Sinners, whereby they doubt and question pardon for Sins of Apostacy, and falling after Repentance.

IX. Beware of running into further sin, and so to provoke God to further Anger : When our Hope is perished, there is nothing so evil, which we shall not dare to do : If help do not speedily come, we are apt to say, it is in vain to pray; it is vain to look up to a God that has thrown us of. Jer. 2. 25. *Thou saidst, There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* You are lost for ever, will the Devil say, and therefore it is all one whether you sin or not, you can but still be lost; this is one of his fiery darts; and if by our compliance we suffer it to take hold upon us, it will terrifie us the more; he will rejoyce at our fall, and put our Souls by every new Transgression, into much more violent and scorching Flames: What monstrous Injections, what unbecoming Thoughts of God, does he suggest; and alas how frequently do we entertain them! for they come thick upon us: In the time of God's displeasure, when the edge of his Holy Spiritual Law does wound our Souls, what vast multitudes of Corruptions do we then discover, that we never saw before? How do our old Sins amaze us, and new ones arise and spring from them? And what can we do in the swelling of *Jordan*? What in so great an inundation, but endeavour in our poor feeble manner to look up to Christ for help. Beg the Spirit; for as one says, *There is no heart so unclean, which this Spirit will not cleanse; no soul so feeble, which he does not fortifie; none so sorrowful, which he does not comfort; none so desolate, which he does not cause to rejoyce;* none

none so slavish, which he does not set at liberty ; none so sick, which he does not heal ; none so dead, which he does not quicken. Surely he will regard us, for he knows, that of our selves we cannot bear up against the Winds and Waves. And let us always remember, That among so many cruel Enemies, 'tis Unbelief that leads the Van : It encourages and draws them on ; and when we have got the Victory over this, all the rest will be daunted, and run away. By Unbelief we open our hearts, and let in all those Thieves and Robbers which deprive us of our Peace. It is the defilement of our Consciences by manifold acts of sin, that makes us like the troubled Sea, which cannot rest : And for a Conscience guilty of many neglects, to lay claim to God's Mercy, is to do as we see Mountebanks sometimes do, who wound their Flesh, to try Conclusions on their own Bodies, how sovereign the Salve is ; yet often they come to feel the smart of their own Presumption, by long and desperate Wounds. Let us in the case even of sore Afflictions, be afraid to sin ; for that Devil that tempts us, will immediately vex and torment us the more for it.

*Sibbs Souls
Conflict, p.
31:*

X. Mistake not those things for evidences of the certain Wrath of God, which perhaps are not really so. He may suspend the expressions of his Love, tho he love us still ; as *Josaph* had the tenderness of a Brother, whilst his Brethren thought him very angry with them : Nay, in our secret supports we are not destitute altogether of his care, tho we know not how they come :

come: As the Metals that lye deep in the ground partake of the Influence of the Sun, tho he does not shine upon them with his Light. There are few Afflictions, but have rather the marks of a Fatherly Kindness, in the seasonable Correction of our Faults, than the Marks of Displeasure. No outward losses, no inward troubles, that are but for a time, are the certain signs of Wrath; no, tho they be very long, and very grievous; for it was not so in the case of *Job*. But *how shall I know* (will some say) *when Afflictions are in wrath*? It is a question to be answered with great tenderness and caution. They are by Divines said to be so: 1. When they come with great Violence, and suddenly destroy, as in the case of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, and in the Deluge. *Psal. 58. 9. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.* *Nahum 1. 9. He will make an utter end, affliction shall not rise up the second time.* And yet this must have some limitations; for a good man may be seized with a violent Disease, and suddenly dye, of whom we ought not to say, that he died by the Wrath of God. 2. When there is no Mercy discernable in the Cross, but only what is evil. 3. When one Evil makes way for another, and none are sanctified. 4. When the Affliction brings some special Sin to remembrance; and when Sin it self deprives us of a Mercy; when Intemperance brings Sickness, Ambition Disgrace; Covetousness and an over-eager Desire of Riches, Poverty. But then, even great Crosses are in Mercy, 1. When God does not afflict us only, but teaches

teaches us at the same time. And 2. When we can be thankful for that Comfort which we have lost, that is, if it be outward ; for I see not how any person can be thankful for Deser-tion while it remains upon him ; for that were to thank God that he is departed, or that he has restrained the manifestations of his Love ; which no man is obliged to do. 3. When all our Los-ses are made up in God, and in the Graces of his Spirit.

C H A P. XI.

Shewing, That present Distress of Consci-ence is no sign of Reprobation. There maybe too great Trouble for Sin : And when it is excessive , former Experiences may be helpful to Afflicted People. And that God will not judge Persons that have been good, according to what they are in the woful Disease of Melan-cholly.

XI. **J**udge not of your Eternal State, by what you now feel ; you may by the Terrors of the Lord, be in Anguish and Tribulation, in the very Suburbs of Hell, and yet never go thi-ther : God may be displeased, and yet after a moments sorrow you may find him to be your Gracious and your Everlasting Friend : You are now, it may be, thrown down ; but his hand
and

and his promise can quickly raise you up again. You may conclude your selves, through the Power of your dismal thoughts, to be Reprobates; and yet God may bring you to Salvation at the last: You may for many years lye in terror, but you cannot, you ought not to say that it will be so for ever. I my self have been so afflicted, in so great Anguish and Perplexity, under such dreadful apprehensions of the Wrath of God, and of his Power and Greatness, as I thought, employed against me, that I thought my self in Hell; knowing that it is not so much a Place, as a State. I thought that my Soul would be gathered with Sinners; and that I should be found at the left hand of Christ. I thought I was cut down for ever; banished from the Courts, and from the Presence of the Lord, and should never see Light, nor Comfort, nor Refreshment any more; and yet through the Grace of God you see I am revived, and am not now without hope, as I once was; and from the very Gates of Death, from the very door of Destruction, I come to tell you, That tho God be Just, yet he is also Gracious. *There is mercy with him that he may be feared*; and that as the Night comes, so will the Morning too; for tho we have provoked him, which was our Folly, yet he will not contend for ever, which is our Comfort. *Psal. 31. 21, 22, 23, 24. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his marvellous loving-kindness, &c. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my Supplications, when I cried unto thee. O love the Lord all ye his saints, — Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen*

strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord. When we are in deep and sore Affliction, that smarts, and makes us groan, 'tis hard indeed to believe, that what makes us so sick, will promote our health; or what breaks us to pieces, will joint our bones again: But our sense and present feeling is not to guide our thoughts: We feel our selves indeed miserable, but we ought to believe that our present Misery may promote our Happiness, tho by ways that we do not for the present see; we are not to judge of God by the Darkness of his Providences, but by the Light of his Word; not by his afflicting Strokes only, but by his Promise; which obliges him to correct us for our Sin, but yet not altogether to destroy us.

XII. Remember that it is an evil thing to be over-much troubled, even for Sin it self; tho this advice does not concern the greatest part of men; the most are secure; they break the Laws of God, and do not tremble; they pollute themselves with manifold abominations, and are not ashamed; they sin with lofty looks, and with hardned hearts; and do evil with both hands earnestly: They take the Name of God in vain; they profane his Sabbaths, they flight his Word, they defy his Threats, they scorn his Messengers, and yet few or none strikes upon his Thigh, and says, *What have I done?* They are daring, where they ought to fear; and rejoice; where they ought to mourn: The greatest part of the world are in a deep slumber, in misery and in danger; but they are insensible, they know not that the end of these

these things will be very bitter and vexatious. But I now speak to such whose Consciences are awakened with a sense of the Greatness, the Majesty, the Justice of God, and the Strictness and Holiness of his Law, and have at the same time a deep sense of their own Guilt, and lability to Condemnation; their thoughts in such troubles are too much apt to sink, and to be over-whelmed; and indeed the view of all their sins set in order before them, is too terrible for them to look upon. The burden and the weight of them is too heavy for any mortal men to bear: But they should consider, That God is not only severe, but very good; that he is not only angry, but reconcilable and willing to be at Peace again: This will represent his love to us and it is that, and that alone that will melt our Hearts with a kindly grief, and keep our sorrow from overflowing the due bounds, as it is very prone to do. And it does so in several Cases:

1. When our sorrow for sin hinders our regular proceeding in the true judgments of things. We know, that in dark and cloudy seasons we cannot distinctly perceive the several Objects that we clearly discern in fair weather: so when our sorrows have raised a mist before our eyes, we dim our reason, and weaken our faculties, and see not things as they really are, but as they do appear, in a dark and confused manner: When we are not able to apprehend things as they are in themselves, but as our Afflictions represent them; that is a false

false Medium whereby to form our Judgments, when they do make us heighten our troubles, and it may be, make them greater than they really are; and when they make us altogether inattentive to those directions, methods, and advices that are suggested for our help.

2. When our sorrow for sin drives us away from God, the sight of our Wounds should make us haste to the Great Physician for a speedy relief. When I have thoroughly beheld my sin, the next thought should be, Oh what need have I of a God to forgive me, of a Saviour to plead my Cause, and of the Holy Spirit to renew me! and to throw my self at his feet, whom I have provoked, in the submissive terms of the poor Prodigal, saying, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* And not because I have once wandred, still to wander in a strange Countrey, far from my proper home. Our grief for sin is too great, when it causes us totally to despair, to give our selves over, as hopeless and lost for ever: This we never ought to do; we weep too much when we cannot see the Goodness and the Mercy of God, as well as his Justice and Severity. When we think that it is good to him that he should oppress and crush the works of his own hands; and when we judge him to be Tyrannical and Cruel, as if he intended nothing but our Ruin; and when we peremptorily say, that he will not hear our Prayers, nor shew us any Favour: When we have no suitable thoughts of his Amiable Nature, his Covenant,
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and his Promise: When by the Painfulness of the Rod, we call in question all that he has ever done for us; and when because he frowns, we say he has thrown us off: When because he delays his help, we say that he *will be gracious and favourable no more for ever*: When we charge him foolishly, and either deny his Providence, or blame his Conduct, because he uses not so gentle a method towards us, as we would have him to take; or when from our distress we make desperate Conclusions of him, or of ourselves: And most of all, when seeing that others whom we reckon as great sinners as our selves, to be in health and peace, whilst we groan and languish, we are apt to say, *Psal. 73. 11. We have cleansed our hearts in vain.* That it is a vain thing to be Religious; to fear such a God, who suffers his Servants to be so very much afflicted, and with such sort of sorrows that are more spiritual, and consequently more bitter than the rest of the world is acquainted withal.

3. We are then too much troubled for our sins, when that trouble does not only indispose us for duty; for if it be attended with pain and trouble, it will be apt so to do; but when it makes us altogether to omit our duty that we owe to God; when our sorrows damp our affections, which are the wings of our souls, to carry us up to God: When it causes us to mind nothing else but what is sad and grievous: When our sorrow swells to so great a height, that it covers with its imperious Waves, all the
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foundations and grounds of Peace and Comfort; it was not so, as some have observed, with our Blessed Lord; for when he was upon the Cross, he was in extreme, in a mighty pain, and violent agonies; and yet did not these take away from him his care for his Mother: So the Good Thief in the midst of his pangs, laboured to gain his fellow, and to save his own soul, and to glorify Christ. These were indeed extraordinary instances; for our sickness may be such, that all that we can perform to God, is a quiet submission to his will, and a desire of the Prayers of others; thus our sorrows for sin are excessive, when they make us to give over Prayer, or Hearing, or the like Duties; when they unstring our Harps, and dull our Praises, and make us unfit for our Calling.

4. When our sorrow puts us upon indirect means for relief; when we put that trust in men that should be placed in God; when we expect that Cure from them, which he alone is able to give; when we seek it in vain Company, in Recreations, or the things of this World; but if our sense of God's displeasure be very great, we soon know that all these things are of no value.

XIII. Call to mind those experiences that you have heretofore had of the goodness of God; remember the years of the right hand of the most High; you are now fearing his Wrath; But can you not remember the time, when his Love was your daily solace and delight? You

are now complaining, that he does not hear your cry; But how many Prayers has he sent back with a gracious answer? How many times have you laid at his feet, in humiliation and tears, and his hand has wiped your tears away? How many times, when you have been fainting, has his Word revived your poor troubled souls? And tho' his Word be now bitter to your taste, and fill you with Gall and Wormwood, yet it is still able to revive you. Those places of Scripture that heretofore revived you, are still able to refresh you; those breasts are still as full of consolation as they ever were; but only you are for the present under a decay of spirits, and have lost your appetite, that you cannot draw that consolation thence as you used to do. Do not forget the many Mercies of your Infancy, your Childhood, your Youth, and your Riper Age; how seasonable, how unexpected, how necessary have your Mercies been, both for your bodies and your souls; and tho' I know it is your abuse of them that grieves and troubles you, yet remember that he that once forgave you, can forgive you still; and that he that did you once so much good, is still able to do you good. *Judg. 13. 23.* If the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have received a sacrifice at our hands, nor have done all this for us. Shall we distrust, shall we forsake, shall we limit a God that has been heretofore so very merciful and so gracious? And tho' it is very true, that it is no comfort to a poor man to think that he was once rich; or to a sick man, to think that he was once in health;
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for the bitterness of his present evils takes away the relish of his former comforts ; and when a Man has lost God in his terrible apprehensions, it makes it to be more intollerable than if he had never enjoyed him : yet the having once had Communion with him by his Grace, and by his Spirit, may give us some reason to hope that the root of the matter is in us, and that God will cause it to bud and spring forth again, tho' it now lye under water, and be covered with many storms and tribulations : And I may add also, with many sins and corruptions with which we were not troubled before.

XIV. Remember that *God will not judge you according to what you are in such a woful distemper as that of Melancholly* ; but it will go with you as you were in the time of your health : This is highly necessary to be considered ; for many good people, when they are under the disease of Melancholly, which can no more be prevented, than a Consumption or a Fever ; they are very apt to express themselves after this or the like manner : I thought I had once been serious, but now I see, that all was a deceit ; I see that I heard, and prayed, and received the Sacrament in vain ; for had I been a true Believer, this would never have befallen me. This is a very false way of arguing, ; for if you had been never so sincere, that sincerity would not have kept away diseases, nor this in particular ; for in *Melancholly* we think and we speak according to our present apprehensions and our fears, and

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these are greatly caused by the disorder of our Imaginations, which is owing to the confusion and the hurry of our thoughts, and that confusion is the product of a great and unusual stagnation or fixing of the Spirits, when the blood is corrupted, and the body indisposed; and this most frequently, *occasioned by the want of rest or sleep*. And 'tis commonly said by others that know not what Melancholly is, Why do you think and pore so much? Divert your selves, think of something else: But it is no more possible for people, where this disease comes with violence, to divert their thoughts, than 'tis possible for a Man to be wakeful in an Apoplexy, and calm in a raging Fever; no more than a Man that has a broken Arm or Leg, can walk and act as he used to do before. And indeed * rational and spiritual methods will not suffice for the cure of this; for you may as well expect that a good Sermon or comfortable words should cure the Falling-sickness, or Palsie, or a broken Head, only because this disease works on the spirits and phantastie, on which words of advice do also work; therefore such Words, and Scripture, and Reason, may somewhat resist it, or may palliate, or allay some of the effects at present; but as soon as time hath worn off the force and effects of these Reasons, the distemper presently returns; and 'tis as natural for a Melancholly person to fear, and to meditate terror, as 'tis for a sick Man to groan, or for one in health to breathe: 'tis certain, that tenacious, obstinate distempers, such as this of Melancholly, will not
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* Mr. Baxter's 32.
Dir. p. 6.

be relieved by meer words or sentences; they cannot indeed cast out their troubled thoughts; they cannot turn away their minds; they can think of nothing but what they do think of, no more than a Man in the Tooth-ach can forbear to think of his pain; and not so to think, is to be cured, which they would be glad to be: And tho' others urge us to rule our thoughts, it gives us no relief, but only adds to our misery, to be frequently urged to that which we cannot do. But my advice to such is, That in the use of such things as they find to yield a natural refreshment to their spirits, they would look up to God, who can make the Winds and Storms to cease, and make that unquiet agitation that is in the Blood and Humours, to be still again; and when he shall be pleased to give you the rest of night, and the clearness and activity of your natural spirits, then your troublesome and uneasie thoughts, by the help they will then receive by reading or advice, will wear away. I speak nothing but what I my self have experienced to be true; for this Disease does magnify our sorrows: What I aim at is this, That when any are in deep Melancholly, so far as they have any Reason left, they should not encrease their own terror, by thinking that all their former Prayers and endeavours have been to no purpose, because they do not then perceive what effect they have had. God is certainly more gracious than to reckon the unavoidable attendants of a *disease, that none can cure but himself*, to be a sin; Men are not to be judged by what strange actions or expressions they

are guilty of in a violent sickness ; and among all that are so, I think this to be most violent.

C H A P. XII.

Of the several ends that God hath in suffering his Servants to be under long Afflictions, and spiritual distress and anguish.

XV. **C**ONSIDER what ends God may have in letting the apprehensions of his wrath continue for a season ; and here I know I enter upon a thing, whereof we cannot have a certain and a comprehensive knowledg ; for the Judgments of God, and great, and long, and severe Tryals, are too deep for us easily to fathom, or to tell particularly what is God's design in this or that : The *Arcana's* of his Government are not obvious to every one that desires to pry into them ; and there are abundance of very dark and mysterious Providences in this World, the Reasons of which we shall never know till the great day. Who can tell the very Cause, why God suffers one Religious Man to suffer affliction for several years, and another that is perhaps no better than he, scarcely knows what affliction means ? One shall be crossed and disappointed in all that he goes about, and meet with losses in his Estate and in his Family, and be damaged in his Health ; when another prospers,

spers, and is well, and dies by an easie death? in what a smooth path do some good people go into Heaven, when others are torn with thorns and bryars, and go mourning and weeping all the way! Who dare presume to say why this is so, and no otherwise! A great modesty becomes our inquiries, when we endeavour to pierce into the Designs of the Great God, whose Throne is established in righteousness, but surrounded with clouds and darkness. *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, Prov. 25. 2.* his Infinite Majesty will not be accountable to us for what he does: there is a thick veil upon the Reasons of his Judgments and Decrees, that he may procure a greater veneration from his Creatures; *Psal. 77. 19. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.* Therefore when we say, that God does this or that for such or such a reason, we must do it with great humility, and only so far as the Scripture is our guide; and from that we may learn that God suffers his people to be under the apprehensions of his wrath, and under long afflictions for such ends as these,

1. It is certainly good for the Universe, for God does nothing in vain; and when any part suffers, 'tis for the good of the whole; tho perhaps we cannot discern how it is so, till his hand has finished his own entire design.

2. That others may be convinced by their very Senses, what a dreadful God he is; and how terrible a thing it is to sin: *When the Lyon roars, who will not fear? Amos 3. 8.* When men

see those that were once pleasant as themselves, shedding tears, and crying out in the bitterness of their souls, that they are undone and miserable; their sad looks, and their doleful expressions bear witness to the Being, and to the Severity and Justice of God: He sometimes in the extraordinary joys which his love produces in the hearts of his people, shews Heaven upon Earth; and sometimes in the fears and amazements and terrors of awakened Consciences, he shews Hell upon Earth, and both by his wise and holy Providence are designed for the good of others. The language of their groans does thus bespeak all that behold their sorrow: Oh sin not against so great and so terrible a God; lest the flames begin to scorch you, that have almost consumed us; we no more thought of falling into his hands, than you do: we thought no more than you, that our sinning would cost us so very dear; but you see what we have felt, and what you may expect if you do not repent and turn, and make your peace with so holy a God as he is; his Power will amaze you, his Arm will crush you if ever you provoke him to send on you such a stroke as ours is; endeavour therefore to profit by such sorrowful Examples.

3. God does it to keep us from carnal Secularity all our lives; *Psal. 9. 20. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.* When our sin has fallen upon us like a Giant newly refreshed with wine; surely the remembrance of that horror, pain and smart, will keep us that we shall not dare to sleep in sin,

sin, nor be unwatchful and presumptuous any more for ever. Surely this will quench all irregular desires, and cause us only to desire *that* God, whose favour we need so very much; this has surely shewn us how great is our weakness and our folly, and how low we sink when he hath left us: this will make us to be humble, and to *walk softly* all our days; remembering we are not every hour more than what God makes us to be; if he leaves us but for one poor moment, where are we? We that have tasted so much of his displeasure, have cause to rejoice with trembling; every remembrance of that doleful time must be to us as a new motive to obedience, and a powerful restraint of sin; *Heb. 12. 10. He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* Oh what an abundance of folly must there have been lodged in our hearts, that God is forced to use so sharp and so severe a method to whip it out! how benumbed were we, that nothing else could awaken us! how diseased, that nothing but a potion so bitter could promote our Cure! how great was our pride, that he was forced to beat it down by so violent a stroke! *Deut. 8. 15, 16. Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness; wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; That he might humble thee, and prove thee, to do thee good in thy latter end.* So Paul had, *2 Cor. 12. 7. a thorn in the flesh.*

3. To convince us of his own All-sufficiency, and the nothingness of our selves, and of all other Creatures. He let us fall, to shew us how
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small our strength is; and that if we would have our goings established, we must depend on him alone. We are in our prosperity apt to think, that this or that Creature, this or that Person will yield us relief; but in spiritual Troubles God shews us, that *all men, even the best of men are vanity*; and those from whom we expect the greatest help, do us the least good: Nay, those Watchmen, of whose skill and kindness we have the greatest opinion, are frequently suffered to smite us by their imprudent, or by their harsh Speeches and Censures, that so we may not look to those Cisterns which we find to be broken ones, but to that Heaven whence all our Consolation flows. When we go to the Creatures with the most raised expectations, we meet with the most unlookt-for disappointment: And indeed whilst we look only to them, we are like people that go begging to the doors of the poor. Our Fellow-creatures are all *Eleemosynary*, and have nothing but what they receive; and unless God helps us, they cannot help; as unless the wind blows, not all the skill of the Pilot, nor all the industry of the Mariner can make the Ship to sail forward to the Port. We think indeed, that if our Friend be sick, we would hasten to his help, and immediately relieve him; but our best Friend stays a long while ere he delivers; not from any pleasure that he takes in our sorrows, but that he may render his Power and his Wisdom more illustrious: as Christ, *John 12. 6, 7.* when he heard that *Lazarus* was sick, stayed two days in the place where he was, that so the glory of God might be more conspicuous

cuous in his Resurrection: And when the season that is most beautiful comes, we shall discern the reason of his delay: He lets us fall low to a wonder, that he may display his Power, that is Almighty; and his Wisdom, that is never at a loss; that we may know, when all other methods have been tried in vain, 'tis he alone that can make our *broken bones to rejoice*: that when we are beset with difficulties which we think insuperable, we may stand still, and see how glorious, how suitable, and how speedy is the Salvation, and the Grace, and the Help of God; and that he alone is the God of Comfort, 2 Cor. 1. 3. That all other things are inconsiderable, but that he is Allsufficient; and it is an excellent Lesson that he teaches us by our most heavy Crosses: None can calm the tumults and uneasiness of a troubled Soul, but he alone; our Spirits are so remote from humane Observations, our Diseases are so inward, and so great, that men cannot reach them; but nothing is too hard for him that is the Father of Spirits; and he calls us peculiarly to regard this his mighty Work; Isa. 57. v. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him. I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.* He creates it; he not only brings peace, but brings it from nothing by his all-powerful efficacy, that nothing can resist — I say again, this I believe is one
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of the principal lessons that God designs to teach us by our inward and spiritual troubles, even, that in him alone our help lies, and that all, even the best of men, are vanity : we must not look for much from them, for if we do so, we shall most surely be disappointed : they have either not patience to hear our Complaints, and to understand the particularities of our Case ; or if any one have so great patience, and so much tenderness, as to hear our sad story, they will, it may be, sigh, or shake their heads at it, but alas they can give us no relief.

4. Another End that God may have in the continuance of long and sore afflictions, and great inward troubles, is, to discover more clearly to us the corruption and defilement of our nature : In a calm, the waters of the Sea appear to be clear enough ; but when the storm comes, then it throws up the mire and dirt ; in prosperity and health we think we have very good hearts, and considerable degrees of sanctification ; but when sin is set home upon us, the spiritual Law of God begins to shew its purity. Oh what multitudes of iniquities do then appear ! what unbelief, what impatience, what murmuring, what unbecoming thoughts of God, such hideous and strange thoughts as we never had before ! In health, and strength, and peace, there are a thousand secular Affairs and Contrivances that take up our time, and divert our minds, and turn us to the view of things without ; but in the trouble of our Consciences our eyes are turned another way, to behold with attention our own Souls, and to see what lusts,
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what impurities, what venomous Creatures, what Vipers have been entertained there; and oh what a ghastly formidable sight is this, to see such a numerous brood of Transgressions, when we imagined that all had been very well with us! it is even a wonder, that God who saw so much evil in us, should let us alone so long. These spiritual Afflictions shew us what a sorry contemptible Creature man is; what cause he has to be debased when he is most proud; and what cause he has to be covered with shame and blushing, when he is most fearless and undaunted: when God does not blow upon our Garden instead of those Spices, those Graces, blowing forth, that may be for his glory, and for our comfort, there is nothing but Weeds and Thistles, nothing but Thorns and Briars that tear and wound us; our Soul is then just like a dead Carcass full of putrefaction; no sprightly motions towards Heaven, no spiritual, no warm desires, like the cold Regions of the *North*, which the Sun does only visit with his fainter and weaker beams; and not like those *Eastern* Countries, where his greater heat does produce Spices and fragrant Flowers.

5. Another End that God hath in the continuance of Spiritual Troubles and Afflictions, and the Sense of his Wrath long upon us, is, that from our own Experience Christ may be for ever very precious to us; when we are at ease, and think our selves whole, we seldom think of him; but our pain, and our smart, our guilt and our fears; the sight of our present

• Danger, and of approaching Wrath, causes us
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to run to this Physician, and to beg his help when we are sinking; it will make us to stretch out our hands, and say, *Master save us, or else we perish.* Never did a poor Man with more earnestness beg an Alms, than we shall beg his help; never did a diseased Person after violent racking Pain more long for Rest, and a Cure, than we shall for Christ; and having fallen among Lyons, having been the slaves of fear, and held in Captivity by the Temptations of Satan, we shall most gladly shake of our Chains, and embrace Liberty and Salvation when our Lord comes to set us free? The sight of him to be our Saviour, will make us run to meet him, and to say, Welcome, thou only Friend of our Souls; welcome, thou dear Physician and Healer of our Souls. *Hosannah to the Son of David, blessed is he that comes to us in the name of the Lord.* Oh! how will our very hearts melt with love, when we remember that as we have been distressed for our Sins against him; so he was in greater Agonies for us! We have had Gall and Wormwood, but he tasted a more bitter Cup. The Anger of God has dried up our Spirits, but he was scorched with a more flaming Wrath. He was under violent pain in the Garden, and on the Cross; ineffable was the sorrow that he felt, being forsaken of his Father, deserted by his Disciples, affronted and reproached by his Enemies, and under a Curse for us. This Sun was under a doleful Eclipse, this Living Lord was pleased to dye, and in his Death was under the Frowns of an Angry God. That Face was then hid from him; that had al-
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ways smiled before; and his Soul felt that horror, and that darkness, which it had never felt before. So, that tho there was no Separation between the divine and humane Nature, yet he suffered Pains equal to those which we had deserv'd to suffer in Hell for ever. God so suspended the Efficacies of his Grace, that it displayed in that hour none of its force and virtue on him. He had no Comfort from Heaven, none from his Angels, none from his Friends, even in that sorrowful hour, when he needed comfort most. Like a Lyon that is hurt in the Forest, so he roared and cried out, tho there was no despair in him; and when he was forsaken, yet there was trust and hope in those words, *My God, My God.* Have we been abandoned of God? He was much more so, and was deserted for a while, that we might not be so for ever. Oh! how frequently should we remember such a Saviour? How delightful should we think and speak of him, who thought nothing too much for us? We have by feeling of the Wrath of God, drank, in some measure, of the Cup whereof he drank. We justly for our Sins, He out of Love and Kindness, that he might make an Atonement and a Propitiation; and if what we have felt was so terrible, how much more dreadful was that which he endured? If the smaller drops that have put our Souls into a flame, have filled us with anguish, what torment did he undergo that was plunged, as into a Sea of Wrath? Surely such a Friend, such a Physician as he has been to us, must be ever valued. We cannot pray, but in his Name;
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we cannot be justified, but with his Righteousness; we can hope for nothing, but by his Merits, and his Intercession; we cannot Live, we cannot dye without him. Let this be the constant Language of our Souls, *None but Christ, none but Christ*, Cant. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.

6. That we may put an high Value on the Scripture, that we may search, and look into it with more earnestness and frequency, to see if there be any Promises in it that are reviving; any place in it that may afford hope and comfort to Souls so miserable, and so guilty. For when our Consciences are awakened, and pierced with the sense of Wrath from God; if his Word would speak peace to us, we could have ease; but the terrible threatnings thereof are the things that wound us deep, and that put us to the greater smart, and we then know and fully believe beyond all doubt, that this is the word by which we are to be tried in the great and solemn day.

7. Another end of God in continuing Afflictions, and a long remaining sense of his Wrath upon us, is, That we may be everlasting admirers of the freeness of his Grace, when we are delivered. Oh! with what wonder should we behold his Condescension, and his care of us, that when our wounds were very deep, he poured in Wine and Oyl; when we were inwardly bleeding, and no Creature, no Friend on Earth could help us, he did not suffer us to bleed to death. Whatever gifts we have, whatsoever advantage above some others .

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in knowledg and in understanding, whatsoever Opportunities we have of doing good, and whatever Zeal we use in doing what that opportunity offers to us, we ought to say with Paul, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* The Hand of God is so strong, his Wisdom is so admirable, that he turns to our profit and advantage, not only the Evils which are caused by cross Events, or by the World, but those which we commit our selves, that seem to be contrary to our Salvation, even those sins which we are guilty of: He changes these Poisons into Physick, these Scandals into Edification; and from the thickest darkness he does bring our light. As by the Adultery, and the Murther of *David*, he opened the eyes of his Servant to consider the horror of his fault; and that which was like to have thrust him into perdition, by the Divine Providence confirmed him in the way of Salvation. By his Fall he was made to know how feeble his nature was; and on the other side, how admirable was the Grace of God; this obliged him to quit all high opinion of himself, and not to seek his happiness any-where else than in the mercy and grace of God: And as to other faithful Persons, this sorrowful example of his was beneficial to mortify their Vanity, and their Pride, and to teach them to put all their trust in God. With what wonder should we daily cry out, *Will God indeed dwell familiarly with men?* Will

*Dailleé Me-
lange,
part 2.
p. 415.*

he pity, will he pardon such impatient, such murmuring, such unbelieving Sinners as we have been? Will he cause us to hear the joyful Voice again, who have so long had the Voice of Ruine and Destruction in our Ears? Will he return and be my God again, when I have so often thought that he was my Enemy? Will he give me the hope of Heaven, when I have been so long at the very door of Hell? Will he put out his hand, and take me into his Ark, when my poor uneasie Soul hath been wandering to and fro seeking for rest, and found none? His end in these Afflictions, and sore Tryals, is, That the delivered Christian may be always employed in wondring at his Love; and when he has lost himself in wondring transporting Joy, may say, *Oh the height, and breadth, and depth!* &c. *Rom. 11. 33.* What, will he be so gracious to me, who have had such hard thoughts of him? Will he embrace me, such a Prodigal as I am, in his Arms? Oh why should he let me live, when others that have been less Sinners than I, are dead and perished? Why should he be kind to me, when I was so undutiful to him? What, will he give me leave to pray yet again to him, when I in my unbelief so often said it was in vain to pray? Will he suffer me that have spoken so unadvisedly with my lips, that have darkened Counsel by words without knowledge, *Job 38. 2.* to take his name in my mouth? Will he suffer a mortal Man, and a vile Sinner, to say, My Lord, and my God? Yes, he will! I see, I feel that there is with him plenteous Redemption; and must for ever admire the riches, and the

the freeness of his Grace. Let others talk of merit, of the power of their own Will, of the light of their own Understandings, of the force and strength of their Reason, for me I know that I have none of these things whereof to boast. I was laid low in the very depths of misery and desolation, and there had I lain still for all that I was able to do. I was hopeleſs, and he filled my despairing Soul with hope. I was very guilty, and he forgave me: I was near to Hell; I saw the flames and smoak of that Infernal pit; I smelled the Fire and Brimstone; and he that alone could help me, brought me back again. I was fainting, and he revived me; dying, and he made me live: How many hath he passed by, and suffered them to pine away in their Iniquities; and he has said unto me, Live! If he will accept of my poor prayers, my weak endeavours, of my heart, and of my Soul; my thoughts, my affections, shall be all employed for him, and for his glory: when I have so long heard the rumour, and the noise of war, he hath sent me the tidings of peace and joy. Oh whence is it, but from his own Grace, that I, who was so far from him, should be brought nigh; that I who hated him so much, should be so greatly beloved! *Enter into thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

VIII. Another end why God suffers his Servants so long to remain under the impressions of his Wrath, is, That they may learn to be merciful, and helpful to others.

1. To such as are in the like case.

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2. To such as are sinning, and have not yet felt the displeasure of God for their Sins.

Dr. Fuller's
Cause and
Cure of a
Wounded
Conscience,
pag. 144.

First, To such as are under trouble of Conscience, and the apprehensions of God's Wrath; 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. Luke 22.32. As our heavenly Father has been merciful to us, so we must be merciful to them: and having met with a Fountain that has quencht our thirst, lead them also to the Spring of Living Waters. Conceive thy self like *Joseph*, therefore sent before, and sold into the *Egypt* of a wounded Conscience, where thy feet were hurt in the Stocks, and the Irons entred into thy Soul, that thou mightest provide food for the famine of others, and especially be a Purveyor of Comfort to those thy Brethren that shall follow thee down into the same doleful Condition. We must not grieve them by *sharp, or unseasonable discourse*: when they are in the Furnace, we must not by imprudent bitterness make it to be more hot: they are wounded in their Souls, and those wounds require a gentle, a skilful, and a tender hand; every one of us should say, they are troubled on every side, and so was I: they are afraid that God is departed, and so was I: those Arrows of the Almighty that stick in them, but a little while ago stuck in me; that Cup that is now in their hand, was but a little while ago in mine; as they sigh, and complain, and groan, and fear, even so did I: therefore let me visit these Sick; direct these Wanderers that have lost their way, and see if these Prisoners by the sight of my Liberty, will become Prisoners of hope. I must lead them to my Physician, and tell them the nature of my cure: when others
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are fallen into the Pit; but of which we are newly got; let us strive to draw them up. Let us put on bowels of compassion; let us patiently hear what they say, and not rebuke them for complaining; let us not be weary of their discourse, because it's doleful and troublesome; let us not smile at that which makes them weep; nor simply call that *fancy*, which is the *anguish and trouble of their Souls*. Let us remember all that speech, and that usage, that made us worse when we were ill, and avoid all such to them. Let us remember what it was that gave us some support, and let us minister the same to them. When any of our Friends are very sick, if we know any Cordial, any Receipt that has been beneficial to us under the like case, we make all the speed we can to fetch it, and we cannot see them faint, without finding at the same time a very sensible commotion in our own hearts: no outward Affliction, though never so painful, is so terrible as these spiritual Troubles are; let us therefore be more affectionately concerned for such distressed Persons, than for any other, when we see the Anger of God beginning to kindle in their Consciences: Let us use all the methods that are most like to quench the beginning flame. For as God commanded the *Israelites* to be kind to strangers, because they themselves were such in the Land of *Egypt*: So let us be very kind and pitiful to all that are in distress, we having been so our selves. Let us take all opportunities to visit, to exhort, to direct them. Let us wrastle with the God of *Jacob* in their behalf; let them see that we sympathize most

heartily with them; and that though the Grace of God has wiped our tears away, yet we can still weep with them that weep. Let us take all the ways we can to make them believe we are afflicted with their affliction, and sincerely concerned for the sadness of their Case; and by this means they will more ruminare on what we say, and regard the more what we tell them, that have been once as they now are; then they will regard others that may speak well indeed, but not from their own Experience. If a man were in a bodily Disease, he would rather have recourse to a Physician that had been himself lately cured of it, than to any other that can talk; it may be, more learnedly about it, but knows not by information or study half so much as he that feels it: the knowledge of the one is but speculative, but the other's is more distinct and practical; and he knows how to make suitable applications to his Patient; from the remembrance of what he felt in his own Body; *Heb. 2. 17, 18. 2 Cor. 1. 6.*

Secondly, God continues the sense of his wrath very long upon the Souls of his People, that they may learn to pity wicked men, and instruct them in the way of happiness; *Psal. 51. 11, 12, 13.* that they may teach them by their words, their serious Exhortations, and their faithful Reproofs, by their holy Conversation, and by their every action that they go about: there are many Lessons that we our selves are not taught, but by the rod, and the frowns of an Angry God, by a very smarting and severe discipline; we see not, till after a long teaching, the

the real evil of Sin, and the true worth of Christ; to the knowledge of which, when we are once arrived, we must communicate some measures of it to others; though the misery is, the most will scarce believe our Report, till they themselves come to feel what we have felt. He that is escaped by the mercy of God out of long trouble of Conscience, can thus say to Sinners; I have dearly paid for all the delight that I once had in sin; for all my indifference and lukewarmness, my cold and sluggish Prayers, my lost and misimproved time; beware that you do not provoke him, for he is a jealous God; for if you do, you shall also find, that those Sins which you make a slight matter of, will tear you to pieces hereafter; you will find them when your Consciences are awakened, to be an heavy, and intolerable burthen; they will press you down to Hell it self. I could not have thought that the displeasure of God had been a thing so bitter, and so very dreadful; *It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for he is a consuming fire*: if his Anger be kindled but a little, you cannot then fix your minds upon any pleasant Objects, nor have one easie Thought; you cannot then go about your business, your Trades, or your secular Affairs; for your Souls will be so much amazed, that you will be full of horror and consternation. Those of us that have *felt the terrors of the Lord*, do most earnestly persuade you to forsake every Sin; for if you indulge, and love your Iniquities, they will set you on fire round about: Oh that you did but know what you do, when you

sin ! you are opposing that Authority that will avenge it self of all its obstinate opposers ; you are heaping up fuel for your own destruction ; you are whetting that Sword that will enter into your Bowels ; you are preparing your selves for bitterness and trouble ; and though God is patient for a while, yet he will not always be so ; the shadows of the night are drawing on, and the doleful time will come, when all your mirth will end in tears, and all your false confidence, and your foolish hopes, will expire and give up the Ghost. And which of you will live when God shall enter into Judgment with you ? VVhat will you do ? VVhere will you go for help, when he that is your Maker, he that has weighed your actions, and observed your wandrings, shall call you to give an account of all these things ? If our blessed Lord, when he came near *Jerusalem*, lift up his voice and wept, saying, *O that thou hadst known, even now in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace !* What cause have we to mourn over our fellow-creatures whom we see to be in danger of misery, and alas they know it not ! Can we see them sleeping on the very edge of ruine, and not be greatly troubled for them ! Oh poor sinners ! you are now sleeping, but *the Judge is at the door* ; you are rolling the pleasant morsel under your tongue, but it will be great vexation to you in the latter end. How can you rest ! how can you be quiet when you have none of your sins pardoned ! no comfortable relation to God ! no well-grounded hope of Heaven ! How can you with any assurance go about those things that

that concern your buying, your selling, and the present Life, when your poor souls, that are of a thousand times more value, are neglected all the while! We have felt great terrors, inexpressible sorrows from an angry God, and we would fain persuade you not to run upon the thick Bosses of his Buckler, not to dare his Justice, not to despise his threats, as once it was our folly; but we knew not what we did. We are come out of great *Tribulation*, and a fiery Furnace, and we would fain persuade you to avoid the like danger; let what we have felt be a caution to you. It was the desire of *Dives* in his misery, that he might leave it, to go thence to warn his Brethren, lest they came to the same place of torment; but it would not be granted; some of us here come from the very Gates of Hell, to warn you that you may not go thither; nay, to warn you that you may never go so near it as we did; we wish you so well, that we would not have any of you to feel so much sorrow and grief as we have felt. We were once asleep as you are, we did not imagine that terror and desolation was so near when it came upon us; and now having been overtaken with a storm of wrath, we come to warn you, that we see the Clouds gather, that there is a sound of much Rain, and of great Misery, tho' your Eyes are so fixt on things below, that you see it not. You must speedily arise, and seek for a shelter, as you tender the salvation of your souls; you must not put off serious thoughts for your own safety, not for one day, not for one hour longer, lest it be too late.

late. We were travelling with as little thought of danger as some of you, and we fell among Thieves, they plundred us of our peace and our comfort, and we were even ready to dye, when that God, whose just displeasure brought us low, was pleased to take pity of us, and to send his Son, as the kind *Samaritan*, to bind up our wounds, and to chear our hearts; and we cannot be so uncharitable as not to tell you, when we see you going the same way, that there are Robbers on the Road; and that if you do not either return, or change your course, you will smart for your security as much as we have done. We have been saved indeed at length from our fears, it is *as by fire*: But we suffered, while they remain'd, very great loss. Some perhaps will be saying within himself, *I shall see no evil, tho' I walk in the imaginations of my own heart*; these things you talk off are the meer product of a *melancholly temper* that always presages the worst, that is always frightening it self and others with black and formidable Ideas; and seeing I am no way inclinable to that distemper, I need not fear any such perplexing thoughts: But *know*, that no briskness of temper, no sanguine couragious hopes, no jollities, nor diversions, can fence you from the wrath of God. If you go on in sin, you must feel the bitterness of it either in this or the next World; and that may, notwithstanding all the strength of your Constitution, all the pleasures of your unfearing Youth, come upon a sudden. That Cup that is full of sparkling Wine, has Dregs and Poyson at the bottom. Your souls

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are always naked and open before God, and he can make terrible impressions of wrath there when he will, notwithstanding by your chearfulness and mirth, you seem to be at the greatest distance from it.

C H A P. XIII.

Shewing what is the Duty of those Persons whom God hath delivered from Melancholly, and from the anguish of their Consciences, under a sense of his Wrath. As also, what a wonderful Act of Providence it is, that suffers a very sinful World to be in so great Peace! and what cause there is for all people to pray against such Diseases, whereof the Devil serves himself to their great torment and vexation. And as the Conclusion of this First Part, What is to be thought of those that are distracted with trouble for their sins; and of those that dye in great darkness as to their spiritual state.

I Should now proceed to shew how those Persons that have been long under a sense of God's displeasure, and who are now come to some good hope through Grace, ought to behave themselves after so terrible a visitation: But my Discourses on the former Verses of this Psalm, and which I have published some time ago, where I mentioned what it is that we are to do
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after recovery from sickness, hath in a great measure prevented my farther insisting on this Subject, as also those ends that I have now mentioned, which God aims at in these dispensations; and if we make it our great care to comply with them, we answer his designs; and even those sore afflictions will be a very great mercy to us. And what I judge further necessary to be said, I shall comprise in these following particulars:

I. That we in all the following part of our Lives, value this World very little; our unmortified affections were the briers and the thorns that pierced us, and multiplied our sorrows. Let us look upon this World and its most admired Glories, as a poor contemptible, empty thing; for so it is indeed. The World by the cares and variety of thoughts to which it naturally carries us, easily disquiets and throws us down, but it cannot with all its charms raise us up again; all its Riches cannot buy an hours Peace and Comfort; all its Honours cannot save us from the Contempt of God; all its pleasures cannot sweeten our Cup, nor all its smiles cheer us when he frowns: The more we are elevated above all earthly things, the more shall we be freed from storm and tempest; and it may be true that some tell us, That the tops of those Mountains that are above the middle Region, are so quiet, that the lightest things there, lye still and are not moved: This World has been formerly, and will be still a place of vanity and vexation of spirit; we have found it to be so; always have we met with trouble.

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When we loved any thing there with an excessive love; alas! it was able to do nothing for us in our sore affliction; when our Consciences were in a flame, there was nothing in it that could quench our thirst; let us esteem at a low rate such an empty World as this, its Comforts are doubtful, but its Miseries are certain; its Grievs are long-lived, but its pleasures are very short.

II. When the sense of the wrath of God is removed, we must, by the remembrance of it, be fortified against the tentations of Satan; when we are tempted to distrust, we must say, I will not entertain any more hard thoughts of a God whom I have found to be faithful; when we are tempted to impatience, under some new returning cross, we must answer and say, I will not fret nor murmur any more against my Gracious and my Loving God, that will, I am sure, remember me still in my low estate, as he did heretofore; when Satan would persuade us that we are no Sons of God, because we are afflicted, or because we are long so, we must quench this dart also, by remembering our dear Redeemer, who was never more beloved, than when he was most sorely tried: There is nothing that will so preserve us, as the remembrance of the kindness and the mercy of God: *His peace that passes understanding will keep our hearts.*

III. Let our escape from such long and sore afflictions, quicken us to Duty: I do not mean by that, only to Prayer, but the performance of all those Acts of Religion, whereby we may glorify

glorify God, and do good to Men. Let our Prayers be more fervent, our Meditations of him more sweet; and our Thoughts of him more constant and abiding. Let us take heed of all formality and unaffectedness of spirit in all our attendance upon God; Let us beware of inward and spiritual decays, and stifle and resist the first abatements and declinings of our love to God, seeing he has withdrawn his hand from us, and his dread does not make us afraid, *Job 9.13,14.* Let us draw near to him, and seek his face, and do it now with more delight; for as the Earth (as one observes) is shut and bound up by frost and cold, and putteth not forth her fruits till the warmth and heat of the Summer call them out; so the heart, under the cold affections of fear and guilt, under the dark apprehensions of wrath and judgement, is so contracted, that it knows not how to draw near to God; but when his love is shed abroad in it, then it is enlarged to the performance of its duty; and the sense of mercy, and the hope of it, gives us great encouragement to pray; for *Prayer is the child of Faith.* Let the Love of God towards us, quicken us to watchfulness, and a dayly care of our own hearts that are so treacherous and deceitful. It once was night, a doleful night with us; but seeing the day is begun to dawn, let us set upon our work with a greater diligence.

IV. Our deliverance from such sad and terrible Apprehensions of God's Wrath, and from long and sore Tryals, should teach us to walk humbly with him. We have seen him in
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the terribleness of his Majesty, we have seen the Lord of Hosts in his Glory, and such a sight cannot but make us know, that we are unclean, *Isaiah 6. 5.* What have we wherein to pride our selves? The Archers have sorely shot at us, and we could not make our Bow abide in strength; God has bruised, tried, and laid us low, to shew us what was in our Hearts; and alas, we saw nothing there, but what was very bad. Such a sight as may cause us to wonder at his Patience, and his healing-grace, and to abhor and loath our selves for ever. The time of our darkness, was a time of Provocation; when we were in the Wilderness, we murmured; and what a Mercy is it, that our Carcasses are not fallen, and our Souls ruined; but that the God whom we so provoked, hath given us the prospect, and the hope of *Canaan* after all this! Those that should have told us, when we were in Health and Peace, that we should have spoke so hardly of God when we were in our distress, that we should censure his Dispensations, and Sin so very much when his Rod, and his Stroke was upon us, we should have thought them very censorious and uncharitable People; but *there is no man knows how bad his heart is, till it be tried by long and sore Afflictions.* Our Anguish, and our Sorrow, and our despairing Fears, caused us to do a thousand things which we should at another season tremble at. And such Fools are we, that even when we are beaten in the Mortar, our folly does not depart from us. Tho God have forgiven us, yet we ought to remember our Murmuring,

muring, our Unbelief, and the like Sins, with a great Self-abhorrence all our days. Isa. 38. 15. *What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my Soul.* We have caused many to be discouraged, many to faint, many to reflect upon Religion, because of our sadness; and the dishonour that may hereby have come to God, should be matter of great Humiliation to us, tho there is in the spiritual Affections of the Religious, something that is very tremendous to the Wicked; 'tis as a Judgment to harden them, and for the falling of many, that by this means they are more fixed in their prejudices against all Religion; and by seeing those that have long pretended to embrace it, very sorrowful, they are tempted to believe there is nothing real in it, and so they go on and sin and dye. We have great cause to be humbled, not to glory in our strength, for we have found it to decay; not to glory in our Knowledge, for we have known such Distempers as have cast a Cloud upon our Understanding. We have been buffeted by Satan to teach us, that we have need of more help to preserve us than our own. Oh! what is Man, when left of God? Nothing but weakness and vanity. *He withdraws man from his purpose, that he may hide pride from man,* Job 33. 17.

V. We must beware of a Relapse, as we must be careful to avoid all those things which may bring upon us the same bodily Diseases, from

from which we are delivered ; so we ought to be as careful to prevent every thing that may bring a new Indisposition and Terror on our Souls, when we are newly come out of the Furnace. Let us beware, that we do not fall again into such hot and fiery Tryals as those are, which we have felt. Let us for ever be very cautious to avoid every thing that has the appearance, or the shew of Sin. And let us for ever be jealous of our own hearts, and watchful over their most secret motions, seeing they have often, alas too often, betrayed us. Let us for ever absolutely deny all the most pleasing Temptations of the Devil, as remembring that he is the Enemy of God ; and remembring withal with what Cruelty and Pride that Enemy of our Salvation insulted over us when it pleased God to leave us for a season. Let us remember how he suggested dreadful and amazing Apprehensions to us ; and let us no more come near the Den of Lyons, nor play upon the hole of Asps. We have felt the Arrows of the Almighty, let us not provoke him again to bend his Bow, and to set us up for a Marke of his Displeasure. It is not long since his Waves, and his Billows went over us ; oh ! let us not plunge our selves again into the deep Waters, nor cause him to frown, whose Frowns we have found to be so very terrible. Psalm 85. 8. *God the Lord will speak peace unto his People ; and to his Saints : but let them not turn again to folly.* It was indeed our folly to provoke so gracious a God ; it was our folly to be indifferent and careless in our holy Duties. Let the Rod that hath made us smart, for

ever drive away that folly which was once bound up in our hearts. Doleful Experience, and Anguish, and Tribulation, has told us what a dreadful thing it is to sin. By the Judgments that we have groaned under, let us learn righteousness. VVe are come off the Rack with broken Bones, and with many Wounds, which our good Physician has been pleased to set and heal again. Let us not rebel against his Laws, lest we be put to the Rack again. 'Tis not indeed, the Corruptions that are within us, that will bring us to it, unless we cherish and approve them when they entice us to what is Evil. Tho they war, if it be against the allowance of our mind, they will not interrupt our Peace with God. Let us not be secure, tho the Devil have left us, it may be only for a season, and he may return again with greater fury. Let us, during the comfortable quiet that we now enjoy, be preparing our selves to resist and oppose all his Assaults for the time to come. Let us, tho we triumph through the Grace of God, remember that our Enemies are not yet fully overthrown; they are not ashamed of one defeat, but will rally their dispersed Forces, and come again: What did we think of Sin, when it had caused the Son of Righteousness to be covered with Clouds, that we could not see him, nor feel his vital quickning Beams for many days? What did we think of it, when it had set us on fire round about, and brought us to the very Gates of Hell, when it sunk, and overwhelmed, and terrified us every moment. Let us never henceforth begin to parley with an Enemy that has

has used us after such a barbarous and cruel manner.

VI. After we are delivered from the dreadful Apprehensions of the Wrath of God, it is our duty to be publickly thankful. *Psal. 66. 16. Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul.* 'Tis for the glory of our Healer, to tell the miserable Wounds that once pained us; and to speak of that kind hand that saved us when we were brought very low. 'Tis for the glory of our Pilot, to tell of the Rocks, and of the Sands; the many Dangers, and threatening Calamities, that he by his wise Conduct made us to escape; and to see us on the safe Shore, may cause others that are yet afflicted, and tost with Tempests, to look to him for help; for he is able, and ready, to save them as well as us. We must, like Soldiers, when a tedious War is over, relate our Combats, our Fears, our Dangers, with delight; and make known our Experiences to doubting, troubled Christians; and to those that have not yet been under such long and severe Tryals as we have been.

VII. The fears that we have had of God, and of his Wrath, must teach us not inordinately to fear any of those Evils that are of a lower nature. Others that have been all their days in ease and quiet; that have had no trouble of Conscience, or none for a long while together, may be afraid of temporal Evils, and inconveniences; but to us who have for a long time
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been afraid of God himself, how slight a thing should the Wrath of Man appear! When we have been under his Displeasure that can kill the Soul, what little cause have we to fear them that can only kill the Body? Others may be afraid of a small distress, of a little ill weather; but it does not become us to fear, who have been in so many several Storms for many months together: when we have been afraid of Hell, there is nothing upon Earth that looks with an aspect so formidable: And if God have delivered us from the greatest Dangers, we ought to believe that he will save us from the lesser Troubles of our Life. Our Experience of so many terrible things, should fortify our minds against all future Afflictions that are not of the same kind. I shall close this part of the Verse with these two Advices.

I. If the Servants of God are obnoxious to such sad apprehensions of his Wrath; Then you have great cause to admire the Peace that is in the World: Many an one among his People is crying, The Lord hath forsaken me; His Wrath lieth hard upon me; and if all his People, if all whose Sins deserve his Wrath, should be all so sensible of it, and complaining and crying out in the like manner; oh! what a doleful Cry would that be! like the Cry that was in *Sodom*, when it rained Fire and Brimstone; like the Cry that was in *Egypt*, when they found all their First-born slain! Oh what a change would appear in the World, if God should let out the sense of his displeasure upon all that have deserved it! this World would be like Hell it self; all Commerce and

and Business would immediately fail; for what heart would men have to trade, to buy, or sell, if they did not know, but the very next moment they might be in Hell! It is one of the mighty Acts of Providence that maintains so great a Calmness in a very sinning-World. For if he were not infinitely patient, if he should open the eyes of all men to see his unspeakable Majesty, Holiness, Glory; and their Offences, and their Deserts, and their nearness to Destruction, and then suffer them, as he justly might, to be tortured with their guilty Thoughts, to be tempted, and overcome, and to sink into despair, oh what Lyons and Tygers would men be! they would tear themselves, and one another. All the Stilness of this Earth would be turned into Rage; all its Joys would be turned into gloomy Sorrows; and all its Laughters into Weeping and Wailing, and gnashing of Teeth; and all the Inhabitants thereof would be in Anguish, and curse their God and King. The most are for the present under insensibility; they do not see whither they are a going, nor feel the horrors that they are capable of: they are treasuring up wrath, and it is his goodness that it does not immediately fall upon their heads in burning drops: there is but a thin Partition between this World, that has in it so many several pleasant Objects, and that World of flaming Torture, where all is dismal and uncomfortable; and if the Curtain were drawn aside, and men could look into that fiery Furnace, and the Wicked did apprehend that they were going thither, oh what consternation, what amazement,

what paleness would be seen on every Forehead that is now most proud and lifted up!

2. Pray to God that you may not fall into such Diseases, whereof *Satan* is apt to make very great advantage: and also pray that *Satan* may not be suffered to bring such sickness upon you as will indispose you for the Service of your Maker. It is of long and severe Afflictions that the Devil makes great use; and they do in their own nature lead to impatience, and murmuring, and hard thoughts of God; and therefore they may be earnestly, but always with submission, prayed against: And tho, if you be naturally melancholly, all the Prayers in the World will not change your Temper; yet by them that black Humour may be kept from tyrannizing over you, as it hath done over many thousands: pray against all such Diseases as are not common to Men; and which being unknown, cannot be relieved; and which by affecting your natural Spirits, may cause you continually to think, and with tormented anxious thoughts, so that you shall be a terror to your selves, unable to follow your Calling; and yet by not affecting you so visibly as other Diseases do, expose you to the uncharitable Censures of your Friends, and to the Reproach of thers: as also may we pray against such Afflictions as do disturb our Reason, that we cannot think, nor exercise our Faculties as we used to do: as it is lawful to pray for the removal of Afflictions; *Job 20. 22.* So also to desire, *That his strokes may not be over-heavy upon us; and that he would remember our frame, and how we are but dust.* If we have been in Diseases

Diseases that have overwhelmed us, it is our duty to pray, and to use all imaginable care, that we do not fall into the like again; and to pray for others, that they may never fall into any such; for of all other Distempers, there is none so insupportable, and so terrible. When we beg new Favours of God for our selves, we must remember others, and wish that they may never feel what we have felt. Beggars (as one observes) when they crave an Alms, frequently use this for a Motive; That the Person of whom they beg, may be preserved from that misery whereof they themselves have had woful Experience. If they be blind, they say, God bless your Eye-sight: If Lamè, God bless your Limbs: if undone by casual burning, God bless you and yours from Fire. So we may say to our Redeemer; Lord, mayst thou never be put to fresh Agonies by the deep Distresses and Agonies of thy poor bleeding Servants: And to you that are good, we may say, The Lord preserve your peace; *The Lord bless you, and make his face to shine upon you*; the Joy of your Lord be your strength; the Lord give you the sweet hopes and foretaste of Heaven; and we wish that you may never drink so much Wormwood and Gall as we have drunk; that you may never see, and know, and feel such Terrors, and so much of Hell as we have felt. It is our duty, as I have said, to pray against such Diseases which have an influence for the most part upon the mind: though it would be a thought very Atheistical, to imagine, that all inward horror of Conscience comes from bodily distress; for

God, to whom all things are naked and open, can make immediate impressions of his Wrath upon the Soul, that shall fill it with sudden amazement and trouble; yet I verily believe, that of all the Christians that are under dreadful fears of Wrath, and in long Terror, there is not one in twenty but whose inward trouble comes either from a Melancholly Temper, or from a multiplication of sharp and severe outward Afflictions; and from these the Devil takes an opportunity to throw his fiery Darts, and to put them all into a flame. Those that know how great Temptations attend long-continued Afflictions, will heartily pray against them; to which I shall only add two Questions, and so conclude this First Part,

Quest. If the Anger of God be but for a moment, what shall we think of those with whom he is angry to their dying day, and who dye in apprehension of his displeasure?

Ans. It is very true, his Servants may dye in these Circumstances: And it is to their poor Souls a very uncomfortable Passage; it is very sad to the Servants of God, for of such I speak, to go to Heaven, speaking in one sense the Language of Hell: 'Tis a mysterious, and a very deep transaction of Providence, that is wise and good, though it be not understood; but many a Believer, even at last, in his dejected apprehensions, thinks himself an Heir of the Curse, that finds himself to be an Heir of Glory. *Many a time*, as one said once by a Person dying •

in trouble, *the Sun sets in a Cloud, and yet arises in a marvellous Light* : or as Mr. Dod said once to a Minister that ask'd him what he could say to one going out of the World, and had no Comfort ; *What*, answered he, *will you say to the Son of God himself, who, when he was dying, complained he was forsaken* ? It is , as I mentioned before, sad to the Person himself, and sad to his Relations, whom he takes his leave of in such doleful Expressions : His sorrowful departure may bring some of them also down to the grave in sorrow ; but yet they may , after all their mourning , meet with joy in the great day ; and their mutual sorrows at their parting may encrease their joy when they meet again : many an one dyes with a dreadful sound in his ears, as if he were a Reprobate , and a Cast-away, whom God will bless ; and who, immediately after his dissolution , shall hear a comfortable Sentence : many an one does Satan pursue, and hunt like a Bird upon the Mountains, who shall arrive safely at his Eternal Home ; where neither his Malice , nor his Spite , shall ever enter. Many an one wanders about here, like *Noah's Dove*, finding no rest, whom God will take into his Ark : And though he seem to be fallen into the very Belly of Hell, yet shall rise again in a blessed Immortality : And those Eyes which were closed with tears, shall in peace see the Lord : We must not judg such Persons, whose Troubles continue to the last moment of their Lives ; for if they have been holy in their Conversation, they shall enter into rest ; tho by a way that is very dark and frightful : *Moses* by the displeasure

Displeasure of God against him for his Provocation, dyed, and came short of that *Canaan* which he very much desired to possess; but when he was in Heaven, he was fully satisfied; and in his God he met with all that he before could desire.

Q. 2. But suppose a person be distracted with the terrors of the Lord, and dye in that woful condition, the Anger of God towards such an one seems to be very great; And how is it consistent with his Promise, *That all things shall work together for good to them that love him?* A distracted person can exercise no Grace, cannot think of God aright, cannot commit himself to Jesus Christ, nor put his soul into any fit posture, by Faith and Patience, for his Lord's coming.

Answ. This has a relation to the former Question; and what I then said, may give some answer to this; and indeed, all terror long continued in a sense of God's displeasure, is attended with distraction. What Man can have his eyes opened to see God against him as he thinks, and to see Hell, as he thinks, preparing for him, and yet have calm and quiet thoughts! It must needs fill him with horror and confusion, it must needs eclipse his Reason, and put all his Apprehensions into an inexpressible ferment, to see himself so like to perish; He can mind nothing else, nor think of nothing else but his danger and his misery; this always returns, this always perplexes and overwhelms him.

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I have met but with one that ever handled this Question, and because of his Judgment, his Learning, and the good report that he has in the Churches of Christ, I will give you the substance of his Answer.

1. This may be for the good of others. Is there not many a lesson that such as are not so afflicted, may learn from so sad a Providence? May not they learn more to admire the Goodness and the Mercy of God to them, that they are not in the like case? And it is so far good to the person himself, tho he discern it not, that he is used as an Instrument to promote the Glory of God.

2. It may (as he says) do him the same good as Death will; *i. e.* deliver him from the evil to come, from the beholding of such Sorrows on the Church, or on his Friends, as would have been a daily torment to him, and on which being deprived of the use of his Reason, he cannot reflect with so great a grief as otherwise he would have done. Or,

3. By this means the Wise God may have prevented his falling into many such Sins and Temptations as might have been very hurtful to others, and have more defiled his own Soul: And who knows but this may be the case of the distracted Person? See Mr. Richard Allen's *Godly man's Portion*, p. 62, 63.

Thus,

Thus, Reader, we have been travelling as through a Wilderness of Fiery Serpents : You have, as I may so say, born me company, whilst I have been shewing you how God leads his Children through a Desert, and the House of Bondage : And I hope it has not been without some profit to some poor Troubled Souls, for whose sakes especially I have so long insisted on this Subject. In the following Part I shall, with God's Assistance, lead you to the brighter side of the Cloud ; where you will not meet with things very Doleful, but very Pleasant.

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning
TROUBLE of MIND,
AND THE
DISEASE of MELANCHOLY.

PART II.

P S A L. XXX. 5.

In his favour is Life.

CHAP. I.

Of the several sorts of Life that we enjoy by God's favour; and in what conditions of our present Pilgrimage it doth more especially revive us.

1. **I**N God's favour is our Natural life: We are the work of his hands, and his kindness and bounty does continually maintain what he at first created; his Providence secures us from innumerable dangers; he gives us meat and drink, and health and strength; but his displeasure does quickly deprive us of all these. 'Tis said of all the
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creatures, Psal. 104. 28, 29. *What thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they dye and return to the dust.* 'Tis this great God to whom we owe our peace and plenty, our liberties, and all the comforts we enjoy; he saves our Bodies from Plague and long sickness, and pining, waiting sorrows; all the delight we have in our Friends, in our Families, or in our Relations, flows from his goodness, and his meer mercy; and 'tis he that saves our Houses from Fire, our Estates from Robbers; and our Country from desolating Wars. Ps. 30. 7. *Lord, by thy favour, thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.* Man being the noblest creature, and the most dignified in all this lower World, God has appointed the lower creatures to Minister to his use, and his delight. The Air, as one observes, is his Aviary; the Sea and Rivers his Fishponds; the Vallies his Granary, the Mountains his Magazine: The first affords Man creatures for nourishment, the other Metals for perfection. The Animals were created for the support of the Life of Man; the Herbs, the Dews and Rains, for the same purpose; there is not the most despicable thing in the whole creation, but is endowed with a nature to contribute something for our welfare, either as food to nourish us when we are healthful, or as Medicine to cure us when we are distempered; or as a Garment to cloath us when we are naked, and arm us against the cold of the season; or as a refreshment when we are weary;

or

or as a delight when we are sad ; all serve for necessity or ornament, either to spread our Table, beautify our Dwellings, furnish our Closets, or store our VVardrobes. *The whole earth is full of his Riches*, Psal. 104. 24.

2. *Spiritual Life is in his favour*; 'Tis he that draws the first lineaments of the new creature, and his hand that brings it to perfection ; he first infuses a vital principle into the soul that is dead in sin, and that maintains it afterwards against all the powerful motions of sin, and against all the stratagems and tentations of the Devil ; from his own Grace he did elect his people to Salvation, and gives them in time his word and his spirit to quicken them, together with all those other blessings of Adoption, and Justification, and Sanctification, which are the product and the fruit of his Electing Love: The first quickning, and those exercises of Life afterwards which his chosen do perform ; the first motion, and the renewed strength which they receive, to enable them to walk in his ways, is his own gift ; 'tis his pardon that bestows upon his Servants a new Life, when they were dead in Law, and could see nothing to ensue but a terrible execution. 'Tis his favour that contrived the way of our escape from death through the Blood of Christ, and that was pleased to accept of the sufferings of that Holy person in our stead : That Faith is of his own operation, which unites us to his Son, the fountain of Life, and conveys quickening influences to us. Joh. 5. 24. *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,*

life, and shall not enter into condemnation; but is passed from death to life. This Faith is of his bestowing, which enables us to be moderate in our prosperity, and to bear the Cross when we are afflicted. All those acts that are the fruit of the New Birth, as well as the New birth it self, are the work of his own hands; for he gives both to will, and to do, he teaches us to fight against our spiritual enemies, and his power being employed for us, causes us to get the Victory. When we are bewildred, his Word is our guide to direct us; and when we are fainting, we have many great and precious Promises to revive our spirits; when we are in darkness, and when we are in danger, he is both our Sun and Shield; his Wind blows upon our Gardens, and causes the Spices to flow forth; he excites and quickens our Graces, when they begin to languish; and when we are lukewarm and cold, he makes us to be lively and fervent in the performance of our holy Duties; for (as one says) what the Soul is to the Body, to move it to natural things, to breathe, to eat, to walk, and the like, the same is the Spirit of God in our Souls, to move us to spiritual actions, as the fear of God, love to him, and trust in him, and all the works of Righteousness, Charity, Humility, Patience and Sobriety, that are the motions of the new creature; so that we may say of this Spirit, that he is the Soul of our Souls; and take away this Spirit, and the Soul resembles a dead Body, it has no zeal for God, no compunction, no tenderness. When we are disconsolate, one kind look from God makes

makes us to be of good chear. When our hearts are benumb'd, and our Eyes are dry, he melts them into tears with his Love: When we are unfruitful, he sends his Dew upon our branches, that makes us to flourish in his Courts, and to look fresh and green; and when we are under Spiritual decays, he causes us to thrive; when we backslide, he heals our backslidings; he brings us, through the great Mediator, into a nearness to, and acquaintance with himself: For as far as we are distant from him, so far are we removed from true and real Life. When we wander, he recalls us; he sends us fresh influences, and establishes our goings, when our motions are like those of a wounded body, very faint and tottering.

3. *Eternal Life is in his favour.* Hence it is said, *That Eternal life is the gift of God*, Rom. 6. 23: Psal. 16. 11. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.* It is there that they are said to see God; for the sight of his face, is that which makes it to be such a glorious and delightful place. His Wrath is that which kindles Hell; the withholding of his Favour makes it to be such a dark and gloomy Dungeon; and the clear manifestation of it does make all the Glories of the Cœlestial Paradise. And therefore *Jacob* when he had a Vision of God's Favour to him, said, *This place is no other than the gate of Heaven.* Frame Gen. 28. not to your selves a gross and a material Happiness; 'tis all in the Love and Favour of God. 17. To see him, fills all the Souls above with ineffable delight; to be deprived of this blessed privilege,
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Monsieur
Claude p.
10.

vilege, fills all the Souls in misery, with Mourning and Lamentation. To his Saints, *God will be all in all*: his Communications will be entire and full there. † As the Creatures are of divers orders, every one receives its portion of Divine Favour, different from that of others. He communicates himself otherwise to the Heavens, than to the Earth; otherwise to an Angel than to a Man. The Earth hath an Image of his firmness; the Sun hath an image of his beauty; the Heaven an image of his immensity; and so in others; but there is no Creature that has assembled in it self, all the beams of the Communications of God. It shall be otherwise in Paradise; God shall be all things in the Saints, and they shall be filled with his Favour. And as he further says, ‘God is not so all in all, ‘in the Faithful here; the troubles of our Conscience, the weakness of our Faith, the languors of our Devotion, the shadows of our Knowledge; our Sins, our Miseries, our Sickness, and our Death, are the fruits of the Fall; and of the Malice of the Devil: But in that Felicity there shall be nothing of US in us; nothing of the Impression of the Devil: All shall be of God; our Shadows shall be swallowed up by his Light, and our Weakness by his power: It is a state of Glory, and Glory is a mixture of all the Blessings of God, in a degree Sovereignly perfect. That Country that is above, is indeed the Land of the Living, they Live, and shall never Dye. But this Earth is a Region and a place of Death. For beside that which is Natural, the most part of men
are

are dead in Sin; and truly even those that are alive, have but a weak and a fainting Life. There it is that the Saints shall be admirers of the Grace and Favour of God: That after various difficulties, and innumerable temptations, and overwhelming fears, did at last bring them to that happy Place. For the poor trembling Saint, that thought himself cast off, and forsaken of God, to find himself in his Arms, in his Presence, in his Heaven, how great will his joy and praise be! How will he ascribe all his life there, to the meer Favour and Grace of God, that shall set him at liberty, when by his many Sins he had deserved to be bound in Eternal Chains! That shall cause him to sing Hallelujahs, when others weep and wail for ever! How will he admire that Grace that has placed him in Heaven, when so many others are in Hell! And the more admire, when he shall consider, that this distinction of States was freely made; That that Crown which will adorn his Head, was freely given! How will every look on God, fill his Soul with a wondring Joy, because he freely gave his Son! How will every view of Christ encrease his wonder! When he shall consider, that he freely undertook the kind work of his Redemption; that he freely shed his Blood, and paid the debt which the Sinner himself could never pay; and that he freely gave the Spirit, and offered that Salvation upon easy terms, *without money and without price*, which cost him very dear! All the Saints above will continually adore the Riches of his Grace, that admitted them to Glory, when they deserved to

be shut out as well as others! That they were deformed, till he put his comeliness upon them! That they were liable to Death, till he justified them; and polluted in their Natures till he renewed them; and dying till he made them to live! That they learned nothing, but what he taught them; had nothing, but what he gave them; did nothing, but what he enabled them to do. So that all must be wonderful in their Eyes, from the beginning of God's design for their Salvation, to the conclusion of it. And when it is all finished, they must with loud Praises sing, Grace, Grace. *By Grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God,* Eph. 2. 8.

First, *No common Mercy yields any Comfort, without the Favour and Love of God. His loving-kindness is better than life,* Psal. 63. 3. If a man have all that he can wish, every thing that is splendid and delightful, every thing that may please his Eye, or gratify his Appetite, if he have not this with the Love of God, he is a Miserable man: For this will mingle Wormwood and Gall with all his Entertainments; to think that God is his Enemy; that these common Blessings may conclude in Hell; and that by all that he Eats, and all that he Drinks, he may be but Fattening for the day of Slaughter: Whilst he is allowing himself in all the Carnal gratifications, by a little consideration, he may discern a Two-edged Sword that hangs over his head, and see a Gulph below that is ready to swallow him, and devour all his hopes and joys; and that all his comforts depend upon the slender thread

thread of Life; and that here is but a small partition between him and Everlasting Burnings: How does this fill him with Amazement and Consternation! With Fear and Horror! And whilst he is most Jovial, he may see a dreadful Handwriting on the Wall, that may make his Knees to smite one against another, and overthrow all his mirth and pleasure. Alas! What does it signify to a man, if all the World smile upon him, if he be under the Wrath and the Frowns of God? They cannot shelter him from the coming storm, nor skreen him from the Consuming Fire. What a small satisfaction is it to a Condemned Malefactor, that the partakers of his Wickedness applaud and caress him, when his Execution draws near, and the day of his Death will put an end to all his Hopes? What Peace can a Sinner have, who has the Lord of Hosts against him? How can he lye down with Comfort, when he knows not but he may awake in Flames? With what ease can he look upon any thing he enjoys, when he knows not but the next moment he himself may be destroyed and lost for evermore? And that his next remove, may be to the Grave, and to a place full of Torment? What Comfort can he find from loud laughs, from cheerful Company, from vain Sports, when it may be the next moment he may be in a place where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth? Without the Favour of God, all that is in the World, all its Promises, all its Pleasures, all its Friendships, all its Entertainments, are meer

Vanity and Vexation of Spirit: If a man fare deliciously every day, if he drink of the most sparkling VVine, if he procure all the Spices of the East, and all the Riches of the VVest; those will not keep his heart from Sorrows, nor these secure him from the Wrath to come. These things are very grateful whilst he is embodied, whilst he can Hear, and Smell, and Taste. But what shall a man that is a stranger to God do, when he is turned into a Spirit? VVhat shall an Immortal Soul do, when all these Corporal goods are past away? VVhere will be his provision? VVhat will be his entertainment, when he is lodged in the Eternal world? VVhen he shall no more hear the Musick, that once charm'd and gratified his Sense; when he shall no more see those Beauties that he once admired and doted on? How must his Soul that pursued nothing but a Temporal and a Carnal Happiness, in that *State of Separation*, be filled with Uneasiness and Regret, with Anguish and Despair, to see it self stript of all its ancient Comforts; and to have nothing remaining that is Comfortable! To be full of flaming desires, and to have nothing wherewith to quench the raging Flame! All that is present, without the Favour of God, is but like Grass upon the House tops; it flatters us with a false opinion of its high station, it looks fair and green, *but the mower has not wherewith to fill his hand*, it quickly fades and withers away; but with God *is the Fountain of Life*, Psal. 36. 9. a Fountain that supplies us with vital streams, and ceases not to refresh, till it mingle with
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the *River of delight, that makes glad the City of God*, Psal. 46. 4. The glories of this World are soon covered with night and darkness; but he is a Sun that ever shines, and from whence issues nothing but cheering and reviving Light. Hence *a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the Revenue of many Wicked*, Prov. 15. 16. *Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.* His little is given him with a Blessing, and their multitude of things attended with a Curse: His Temporal Mercies are the forerunners of Eternal; he tastes a sweetness in what he has, because he is sure that it flows from the Love of God. *He can eat his bread with joy, and drink his wine with a cheerful heart; because his works are accepted*, Eccles. 9. 7.

2. *The Favour of God is Life in all temporal Wants and Afflictions*: No Affliction can be born, if a man do not see his Fatherly Goodness orders and directs the most sharp and bitter Cup. How can a man hold out in trouble, when he knows not but it may be to him the beginning of Sorrows? With what grief must he weep, that knows not that his tears shall ever be wiped away? How deeply must he sigh, that looks upon his stroke to be the stroke of an Enemy, and the chastisement of a Cruel one? *Jer. 30. 14, 15.* But now the Favour of God reconciles the Soul to his most severe and mysterious Dispensations; and teaches it to be silent under his hand; and to believe, that though he is angry now, yet he will not be so for ever. When a poor Soul looks round about, and sees vexation and trouble over all the World; this Favour of

God encourages him to look above, where he finds a calm and rest. When the men in whom he most confided, prove deceitful, and when from those from whom he expected the greatest kindness, he meets with the greatest disappointments, then he can have recourse to that God that will never change: when he is left alone, and forsaken, the Divine Presence gives him Honey in the Wilderness, and turns his Dungeon into a Paradise; what he wants in the Creatures, is plentifully supplied in his blessed and glorious Creator: And though he be poor in the World, *yet he is rich in faith*; Jam. 2. 5. Though he have nothing on Earth that he can call his own, yet what a sweet support is it to think, that God is his: what need he care, though he be cast off by all the World, when God receives him? What need he care if they condemn him, when the Sovereign Judge of all does acquit him, and bids him *be of good cheer, for his sins are forgiven*? He need not fear all their daring Threats, their Insolence and Pride, when he can look up with *Stephen*, and see Jesus at the right hand of God to plead his Cause: Though he lose his Friends, and his Earthly Comforts, yet he has an Almighty Friend that he can never lose. Every Correction is grateful to a Soul thus priviledg'd; for how unpleasant soever it be for the present, he knows it shall promote his final good; Rom. 8. 28. He knows that his heavenly Father tutors him by so sharp a discipline for his own glorious Kingdom; and relies upon his faithful Promise to bring him thither; he knows, when he is most pained, he is under
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the Conduct of a tender, and a skilful Physician; that though he search his Sore, will not fail to advance and compleat his Cure; and therefore does encourage himself to trust in him, whom he shall praise *as the health of his countenance, and his God*: He knows, that when he is thrown down by Sickneſs, the Everlaſting Arms will be underneath; and that he ſhall be ſtrengthened with ſtrength in his Soul, when his Body begins to decay: but now without the favour of God, every little Croſs proves a burthen too heavy for us to bear. When a man thinks with himſelf thus; Theſe pains that I feel, are the wounds of an Enemy; when a man ſees nothing but what is diſmal, dark and troubleſome, and has no proſpect of a dawning or approaching Light, how ſad and how overwhelmed muſt he needs be? how ſmall a thing will ſink us, when the Comforter that ſhould relieve our Souls, is departed? *Lam. 1. 16.*

3. *This Favour of God is Life to us in the Troubles of our Conſcience*; and there are no Troubles in the World like to theſe; *Pſal. 88. 3, 4.* In all other Troubles, our Friends by their kind Diſcourſes, and their pitiful Expreſſions, may mitigate our Sorrow; but how can they ſpeak peace, when God has declared a War againſt us! *Job 34. 29.* *When he giveth quietneſs, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?* When he in his juſt diſpleaſure raises a Storm, who can make the Waters ſmooth again? When the Sun is once ſet, can all the power of Nature make it to riſe again. Other Troubles make the Body droop, but

but these make the Soul it self to languish, and to pine away : What but the Favour of God can revive us, when our Hearts, under the sense of Sin and Guilt, begin to dye within us ! When our Sins are set in order before us, who can free us from the formidable sight ? Who but he can teach our hands to fight, and to get the Victory ? When we are awakened with the sense of Wrath, with the fear of Hell, and of Destruction, who can close our eyes again ? When we are under these inward Wounds, who can pour in Oyl, who can bind them up, or heal them, but he alone ? When our Consciences accuse us for our former and our later Sins, who then can plead our Cause ? who can be on our side, when God himself has overthrown us ? When the spiritual and holy Law slays us, who can give us Life ? When the Word pronounces a dreadful Sentence against us, who is able to reverse it ? Who in Heaven or Earth can be our Helper, if we find not help in God ? Who will give us any comfort, when through the terrors of our Souls we are looking for the Wrath to come ? Who will give us rest, when we lie down, and rise again, with a sense of the Fury, and the Displeasure of the Lord ? *Deut.* 28. 66, 67. VVhen a Soul is continually venting its presaging Fears, and saying, Now I am troubled, but I shall shortly be in much greater trouble : now I am with my Friends, but it may be shortly I shall be with Devils : now I am on Earth, but it may be shortly I shall be in Hell : now the Favour of God brings life to the dying Soul : one beam of his favour causes the

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disconsolate Mourner to lay aside his mourning Garments, and to rejoice. After long Terrors, how sweet is the Voice of God that brings the news of a pardon? how welcome are the Tidings of a Pardon to a Malefactor at the very place of Execution; and when God has brought us out of the deep VVaters, and the miry Pit, our very Bones begin to rejoice: it spreads a chearfulness over every part, to think that one whom we had so highly offended, will yet be reconciled again; it raises us even to transport and wonder; what, will he be gracious and merciful to such as we are! Is it not pleasant after a long war, to be at peace; after hard labour, to rest; after a long Journey, to arrive at our home? so it will be to see the Face of God after a long darkness to shine upon us again. As a devout Lady once said; ‘ I have found him
‘ whom I sought; the Love of my Soul, and
‘ the Joy of mine Heart; My Lord, and my
‘ God: Now my Joys return, I now behold the
‘ Face of God, and feel his Comforts in the
‘ service and worship of him; and therefore
‘ every hour seems five till the hour of Prayer
‘ comes; till by Contemplations and Medita-
‘ tions I bring my God to my Soul. I could
‘ wish every one of the days for the solemn
‘ worship of God, to be a *Joshua’s* day, the
‘ longest is too short for me; and my wonted
‘ hours of Devotion and Meditation are too nar-
‘ row a confinement for them: and when I am
‘ refreshed with the Comforts of God, my heart
‘ dilates it self further by looking on the Joys of
‘ Heaven; for if there be such joy, during the
Seed

See *Life of the Countess of Falkland*, p. 22.

Seed time, how infinite is the Joy of Harvest. What can be more great, more delicious, and more comfortable, than to find that the Sun of Righteousness will shine upon us with his healing beams; assuring us of his Grace here, and of his Glory in the World to come? To see that Hell, and that Curse of the Law in which we thought our selves involved, to be under our feet! to see the Yoke of Sin broken, and the power of Death abolished! to see the Heavenly Sanctuary open, and Christ our Salvation on the Throne, reaching out to us his hand, and guarding us to that happiness which he hath purchased with his Blood! Oh! how cold, and how miserable are all the Delights of the World to such a delightful fight as this? and how happy are the People whose God is the Lord! No Pleasures, no Creature-comforts, no merry Songs can give quiet to a troubled Soul without the Favour, and the Love of God: till he come, all other methods do but make the Clouds more black, and encrease our Sorrows.

4. *His Favour is Life in the vehement Assaults and Temptations of the Devil.* When the strong man armed comes against us, when he darts his fiery darts, what can hurt us, if he compass us about with *his loving-kindness as with a shield?* *Psal. 5. 12.* He can disarm the Tempter, and restrain his Malice, and tread him under our feet. If God be not with us, if he do not give us sufficient Grace; so subtle, so powerful, so politick an Enemy will be too hard for us: how surely are we foil'd, and get the worse, when

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we pretend to grapple with him in our own strength. How many falls, and how many bruises by those falls have we got, by relying too much on our own skill? How often have we had the help of God, when we have humbly ask'd it! And how sure are we to get the Victory, *if Chrſt pray for us that our faith do not fail!* Luk. 22. 31. VWhere can we go for shelter, but unto God our Maker! when this Lyon of the Forest does begin to roar, how will he terrify and vex us, till he that permits him for a while to trouble us, be pleased to chain him up again!

5. *God's Favour is Life, even in Death it ſelf.* He cures all the diſorders of the Soul: He weans it from the Body, and makes the paſſage to another World ſweet and eaſie: He can take away the frightful, ghaffly aſpect of Death, and beſtow upon it a pleaſant and amiable look: and hence it is, that ſick People are often heard to ſay; *Oh! If I had but the Favour, and the Love of God, I could be freely willing to dye even in this moment! If I had but his Love, I could bear all theſe pains, and quietly ſubmit, though I have reſtleſſ nights, and weary days; for then I ſhould be ſure of Eternal Reſt.* It is our eſtrangedneſs from God that makes us live in bondage all our days; and when our time to dye is come, makes us ſo very loth to depart. This ſenſe of God's diſpleaſure makes a Death-bed to be a Bed of ſorrow; and makes Death to be indeed the King of Terrors: and who can but tremble, when he finds himſelf leaving this World, and knows not what will be his portion in the next? that finds
himſelf

himself going to the Judgment-seat, but knows not whether he shall be acquitted or condemned there! how many times do the very thoughts of Death cut us in our Sickness to the very Soul, because our spirits are clouded, and our evidence for Salvation is departed even before we depart, so that we stand trembling on the borders of Eternity, and would fain stay on Earth, though we cannot? VVhat but the favour of God will help us? *When our heart, and our flesh fails, He will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever, Ps. 73. 26.* VVhat but this will attend us through the shady Vale? How can we part with our Friends, if God be not our Friend? How can we leave this Earthly Tabernacle, if we have not an House not made with Hands? How shall we look upon so vast a Change, as that of Time into Eternity, if we are not to change this Mortal for a better Life? But one smile of the Face of God in that great and concluding-work, will keep us that we shall not be afraid to dye: one fore-taste of Heaven will make us with undaunted hearts to bid this sinful VVorld adieu; we shall then like *Moses*, undress our selves, and dye: we shall with the same chearfulness go down to the Grave, which *Jacob* went with into *Egypt*; because our Mediator and our elder Brother lives, and has made good provision for us. VVe shall not be amazed to lie down in the dust, when once we have the hope of a blessed and a glorious Resurrection; and the day of our death will be a comfortable day, if our blessed Lord be then pleased to tell us, that on the same day we shall be with him in Paradise.

C H A P. II.

Of Heaven and Hell, and of that spiritual death which hath seized the greatest part of the World. As also the Reason why Good people are many times very willing to dye; and of the inexcusableness and misery of those who are without God's favour: And whence it is that some grow in Grace more than others, and are more earnest for a share in the Love of God.

Inf. 1. **W**Hat a blessed and glorious place is Heaven, that is full of God's favour! The City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Rev. 21. 23. Rev. 22. 2, 3, 4, 5. It is the Land of the Living, and 'tis no wonder that death shall never enter thither; here indeed he is a God that hides himself, he is hid under the veil of the Creatures, and under abundance of mysterious Providences; for tho' his Throne be established in Righteousness, yet Clouds and Darkness are round about it, Psal. 97. 7. Beams of his Glory do every where break forth through every Creature, Providence, Law, and Ordinance of his; yet much of his Glory that shines in the Creation, is hid by a train of second Causes, through which few look to the first; his work
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Mr. How,
of delight-
ing in
God.
P. 353.

in the World is carried on in a mystery; his Interest lives, but is deprest; they who are devoted to him, are supported, indeed, by his invifible hand; but are in the mean time low for the moft part, and afflicted: But in that Eternal ftate, the Veil fhall be rent, and he will in a brighter manner fhew himfelf; his Glory will fhine out with direct and pleafant Beams to all the beholding and admiring eyes; he will there give forth the full and fatisfying Communications of his Love, that will chear, and fatisfy, and refresh a vaft multitude of grateful and adoring fpirits. Here the Souls of good Men are deprest by the misrepresentations of Satan, and by the frequent jealousies and fufpitions of their own guilty fouls; but there they fhall fee him as he is; and which will encrease their joy, fee him to be their own God for ever. No ftorms fhall there moleft their Peace, nothing fhall interrupt their Eternal Calm: Not a vain, tumultuous, repining or uneafie thought fhall affault their peaceful and quiet hearts for ever; No more fhall they cry out, Is his Mercy clean gone? Has he forgotten to be gracious? for they fhall be with him in his own prefence. Here his Family is composed of feveral diftressed, mourning, Children, and when fome praife him, their praifes are difturb'd by the groans of others, or their own fins; but there, they fhall all be clothed with praife, and none fhall be fick or dye. If we did but know that there were a place in the World, where the people never dye, the love that all have of Life would put them upon many in-

inquiries, how they might get thither. This Countrey is Heaven ; thence death, and fear, and consternation is banished for ever ; and thither should we lift up our eyes, thither should we direct our hearts ; in Heaven the favour of God shines with an unclouded brightness ; they that are Inhabitants of that holy place, are employed in an honourable attendance on their mighty King ; they need not, they desire not any of those enjoyments which are here below, no more than favourites of their Prince desire a meaner station, or a poor Cottage, or some obscure and forlorn retreat. And alas ! what are all our pleasures, and our most splendid entertainments, to that Bread, and to those spiritual and intellectual Joys which Angels and glorified souls feed on ! The first hour, the first day of joy there, is better than an Age of joys here below ; if one day spent in his Courts, in his Love and Praises here, be better than a thousand elsewhere, What will one day in Heaven be ! There we shall not live upon things meaner than our selves ; we shall there have no mean complacencies, nor dishonourable cares ; in the favour and the sight of God we shall have a taste of all excellencies and delights, without the least mixture of evil ; and what transports shall we have, when we come to the full view of him, the sight of whom, even at this distance, was so sweet and comfortable to us ! When after all our doubtings, our fears, and our sad thoughts, we find that we have, through many dangers, gain'd our Port.

Inf. 2. *If the favour of God be life, O! what a doleful place is hell, where this favour never comes! Job 10. last vers.* How black is their darkness, and how long and tedious is their night that shall never have the dawn of day! Oh! how terrible and how frightful is the second death! A death that torments the separated soul! A death that banishes it from the presence of the Lord! A death that excludes it from all comfortable sight of God! There the Damned see him as a Judge, feel his amazing terrors; but they would gladly, if they could, wrap themselves in darkness, and never see such a frowning and a dreadful God; there is anguish, and wo, and tribulation; and the continual groan and cry of that place, *God is gone away from us for ever.* His Face and his Light cheers his Saints; but it scorches us, and puts us all into a flame. This is the language of their misery, That God will shew them no pity; That he is deaf to their cries, and has shut up his bowels that once earned over them, in Eternal wrath: That he once indeed would have been reconciled, and they would not; and now they shall never have an offer of his favour any more. Oh! poor forsaken souls! what shall they do that have no God to give them help, no Mediator to plead their Cause, no Physician to bind up their wounds, no kind hand to give them the least comfort! nothing but wrath, and no love; nothing but vengeance and destruction, and no mercy with it! The Servants of God never taste so much of Hell, as when his face is hid; it brings upon them

them desolation, terror, and the very pangs of death; but they have now and then some support, some little beams of light; but in that doleful place there is nothing else but sorrow and despair. Here, in all the temptations of his Servants, Christ is concerned, sympathizes with them, and in his due time sends them relief: But he will never concern himself with the Damned, nor cast one gracious eye upon them; they are fallen, and he will not raise them up; they are perish'd, and they must perish; they thirst indeed, but shall never have a drop of water to cool their tongues. What will the poor creatures do, when they are overwhelm'd with the wrath of one that is Almighty! Oh! how loud will be their Cries! and how dreadful their complaints, when after millions of years are past, they have still as many more to come! When they have been long tost upon the lake of fire, they will never be nearer to the shore; never hear one comfortable word from the mouth of God! Oh! how glad would they be to have one smile of his face, one days refreshment! but it must not be; the gulph is fix'd, and the sentence is irrevocable. Isa. 27.11. *He that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no favour.* Oh! what can be thought more desolate than to be forsaken of God! to be forsaken of God, in whom alone is Life, and to be cast into outer darkness! And what will be the consternation of the great day, when he shall say to the wicked, *Depart from me! &c.* To hear that voice, and that word, *Depart from me,*

will be their Hell: They shall not be able to turn their thoughts from the contemplation of their own miseries, nor their eyes from the sight of those objects that will fill them with grief and horror, and be themselves abominable; for what a despicable deformed thing, even now, is an Apostate Angel, that is stript of the Life of God!

Inf. 3. *If Life be in the favour of God, then the greatest part of the World is dead; for the most are alienated from him by their evil works; the most are stupid and insensible, in a dead slumber, and are his enemies. She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she lives, 1 Tim. 5. 6.* And if this be a symptom and a mark of death, How many dead have we among us! How many that find time enough for their Games, their Sports, and their Recreations, and find no time wherein to call upon the Lord, and to seek his favour! How many eat and drink, and are merry, even when their Souls are in the greatest danger, and their Maker is their enemy! 'Tis a sign, that when they are so little sensible of their greatest interest, and have so little taste and liking of Divine Joys, that they are spiritually dead. How much greater is the number of the dead than of the living! How many Families are there, that are without Prayer, without any sense of God at all, and in which all the whole Family is dead! And in those, where there are some alive, How many are there yet not quickned! How many good Parents are mourning over their dying Children whom

whom they cannot bring to life ! They see them stepping into the Grave, and all their intreaties, all their Tears, all their Prayers cannot bring them thence ! And in our Congregations, how many are there that have indeed *a name to live, but are dead !* that have never yet Rev. 3. 1. been in earnest for their Salvation ! that suffer days and years unconcernedly to rowl over their heads, and are never the nearer Heaven at the conclusion of the year, than they were at the beginning of it ! They have, indeed, it may be, risen early, and sate up late ; but all their cares have been as much for the Body, as if they had no Soul : They are grown crooked with looking downward, and are as earthly and as sensual, as if they had no Heaven to mind. And what an heartless thing is it to the Ministers, to find that they spend their labour in speaking to the dead, and who in a great measure remain dead still ! Tho' they do it not without hope, that at some time or another, their Master will say to them as to the Prophet, *Ezek. 37. 2, 3, 4, &c.* Oh ! what a Plague is among us, and we feel it not ! Gray hairs are here and there upon us, and we discern it not ! How many Captives has the Prince of darkness, that are no way grieved at their own Captivity ! How many are strangers to the favour of God, that never saw his reconciled face, never felt the quickning Influences of his Spirit to this very day ! And yet rejoyce, as if all were safe and well ! That sit down to eat and to drink, and rise up to play ; and in the midst of those diversions Death seizes on their Bodies, and when their

Bodies dye, their Souls dye, and are past our help. Oh! my Friends, if you have any Life, any Compassion, put on the bowels of Christ, and take up a lamentation for the dead.

Inf. IV. *Why good Christians are so willing to depart from this World.* 'Tis because the favour of God is their Life; and when they are dead, they live again; because they cannot see God and live, they are content to dye that they may enjoy the blessed sight. They remember very well, that they are strangers and pilgrims on earth; that Affliction is as proper to this World, as Heat in Summer, and Storms and Snow in Winter; they know how coarse soever their fare be, how harsh soever the usage they meet withal, that they are travelling to their dearest Countrey; and every one of those Holy Pilgrims in the way to *Sion*, is continually crying out (as one says) after this or the like manner, "As for thee, O City of God, how great, and how transcendent is thy beauty! Nothing but thee do I desire; I think of nothing but thee; I pant, I thirst, I long for thy felicity. How do I long for thee, thou sure reversion of never-fading pleasures! O! Paradise, thou art the recompence of my Travels, and the sole aim of all my Hopes. How fain would I leave these habitations of Clay, to dwell in thy eternal and delightful Mansions! What would I not give to enjoy the liberty of thy Citizens! O! *Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem*, when shall I leave this ruinous and shaken House! O that I had the Wings of a Dove! for then

*Situation
of Para-
dise, p. 95.*

“ then would I fly away, and be at rest: O!

“ when, when shall I arrive there! How long

“ will it be ere I enter the Court of Heaven!

Oh! how have many, on whom the face of God hath comfortably shined, long'd to depart, and to be with him? They bear all disappointments and vexations in the hope of this; and pain and sickness are welcome, because they are as the wheels of their Chariots, and drive them nearer to their home. Such as these are like a Ship well freighted, that is ready to Sail, and stays only till a favourable Wind present it self. They dye not by surprise; for these happy Travellers to Glory, are always on the road that leads to the blessed place above; Death is not frightful to them, because they have often meditated what it is to dye, and what is required for so vast a change. There are, indeed, a great many formidable things in Death, the separation of the Soul, the many foregoing pains, and an innumerable Army of Sorrows and Grievs, that march before the King of Terrors; all which, by Faith, these holy persons overcome; they know that Christ hath taken from Death, all its poysonous and hurtful qualities. Their distance from God is the trouble of all good people; and when he shews himself, they rejoyce, as when he hides himself they mourn. And hence many a Religious Person, when he came to dye, has been heard to say, I would not now, for all the World, be without an Interest in Christ; I always found him to be a good Master, and I still find him to be so; he has taken away the sting of death, and I am

willing to go unto the House prepared for all living; for my Lord hath been there before, and has perfumed and sanctified the Grave. Thou lookest, O Grave, with a dreadful aspect to Flesh and Blood, but not so to Faith; and I bid thee welcome, as the way to Glory: I commit my Body to thee, to keep it safe till the Resurrection, when my Soul, that I now commit into the hands of my Saviour, shall come and fetch it back again. With the sense of this favour of God, did the Martyrs so chearfully persevere, and look upon their dying day as the day of their Coronation; this Favour made them to scorn the threats and the frowns of Tyrants, and all their rage and fury; by this they went to the fiery furnace as to a bed of Roses, because they knew God would be with them there. In the hope of his acceptance, old and young, grave Matrons and tender Virgins have embraced the Stakes, and kist the Flames, and freely dyed; and have rejoiced, and look'd with an unmoved countenance on all the preparations of death, whilst those that were the spectators of their patience, could not look upon them without flowing eyes; To whom, they have said, Death would be frightful, if we looked no further; but it comforts us when we see the Crowns, the Hallelujahs, and the Glories that wait for us on the further side. This will deliver us from an evil World, from our corrupt hearts, and from all those sins which we have long groaned under; this will bring us to him, whom all our days we have long'd to see. Our Friends bewail us here,
but

but Angels are waiting for our Souls, and will be glad to convey them to their Lord Christ and ours: and conformably to this, did those Forty Martyrs whom *Basil* and so many of the Fathers celebrate, encourage one another; when neither Promises nor Threats would prevail with them to forsake their God, they were condemned to be exposed on Ice, to be kill'd with Cold; when they beheld the place, casting away their Garments, they ran to it with delight, not as if they had been going to Death, but to gather the spoils of Victory: VVith our Garments, said they, we shall put off our old man, our Sin, and all the corruptions of our Nature. VVhat great thing is it if the servant suffer that which his Lord endured before! VVe were the cause that he was disrobed and afflicted; the cold, said these happy Souls, is troublesome, but Paradise is sweet: This Ice afflicts us; but the Rest there, will delight us: Let us endure this cold a litte while longer, and the warmth of *Abraham's* Bosom will refresh us for ever: VVe shall exchange this bitter and tempestuous Night, for an Eternal Day. Let us turn our backs upon the world; and seeing we are once to dye, Let us now Dye, that we may Live: And O Lord, let us be acceptable to thee, when we are offered to thee by this painful Death. Thus they endured in the cold night, rejoycing in the hope of Glory. VVhat wonders of courage and of zeal have been produced by the sense of the Favour and the Love of God!

Inf. 5. *How inexcusable are they that refuse this Favour of God, in which alone is Life!* Who would chuse to be a Beggar, when he might be the King's Favourite? Who would chuse to embrace a Dunghill, when he might be treated with Plenty, and all suitable accommodations? Who would chuse to be Sick, or Blind, when he might receive his Sight? And yet this is the sad case of Sinners! God would be their friend, and they will not have him to be so; he would save them, and they will not be saved; he would bless them, and they chuse to be curs'd. How many are there, that prefer a Lust before a Saviour, and Earth before Heaven, and the applause of their vain sottish Companions, before the approbation of the All-seeing Judge? O blind Sinners! Why will you lay hands upon your selves, and do all you can to deprive your Souls of Life? What a sad thing is it, as one says, to deny sustenance to thine own Life! The breath of God is in thee, what shall be done to him that starveth a Prince's child? What have we of like worth to Spiritual Vigour, Agility, Courage and Peace of Soul! And shall we who have a door of Life, at once offer contempt to Divine goodness, and violence to our own Life, by not using what God hath put in our hands for our relief! Is there so much allurements in destruction, and so much Beauty in Eternal Flames, that you cannot forbear going thither! Why will you suffer your Souls to starve, whilst you are contriving to gratify the Flesh? Why will you still serve the Devil
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Sym-
mond's
*Sight and
Faith.* p.
214.

and your own Sins? Are they so good Masters, will they pay you so well in the latter end? Are you content to have the pleasures of Sin for a season, though you lose your share in Paradise? Oh what bitter reflections on so bad a choice will this cause hereafter! VVhen you shall lift up your Eyes in misery, and see the Kingdom of Heaven afar off, and say, I was once offered that Kingdom and those Joys, and I would not have them; I was once fair for Salvation, but I slighted it; I might have had the Favour of God, and I would not have it; O my cursed Sins! How you have deceived me! You promised me delight, and you have brought me to bitterness and wo; you promised me safety, and you have made me to perish; Oh that some Angel, or some Saint, might be sent to bring me some relief! The word of God told me of that Glory; his Ministers earnestly intreated me to prepare for it; my Friends were always bidding me to leave my wicked course; my Conscience checkt me for it, and I broke through all these exhortations and these checks, and so am come laden with guilt, to Eternal Misery. I was at my Games and Sports, when I should have been upon my Knees: I had indeed time, and strength, and health, and many helps and advantages; O that I had all my days watcht, and strived, and denyed my self, then I should not have come to this place of Torment! O that my Sun would rise again! O that I might have another Tryal, and more time! But alas! the Judge is my Enemy, I have heard my Sentence, and he will not change his purpose!

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I am condemned, I am lost for ever! O Sinners! As you would never fall into such a hopeless state, now, even now, seek the face of God: Have you not already spent time enough in Sin, in walking in the imagination of your own hearts, and the sight of your own eyes? Have you not loved your sottish pleasures long enough? O! come leave the tents of Wickedness, come and Love your God, for he is ready to receive you; come to him, and all your sins shall be forgiven! O let not Mercy it self, that speaks for your hearts, be denied: Who will be so good a friend as God? Who will abide with you, when life it self is gone? And now surely, the heart of some sinner or another begins to relent; some that is saying with himself, Though I never prayed in secret before, yet now I will begin to pray: Though I lost abundance of my youth and my health, I will strive to lose no more: I have put off God and my Conscience with vain excuses and delays, but I will not put them off again: He shall have my thoughts, my heart, and my endeavours, who gave me life; and I will ever admire the riches of his Love, if he will pardon such a Malefactor, and condescend to such a Worm, and entertain such a Prodigal as I have been.

Inf. 6. In what a woful Condition are those poor Sinners that are without this Favour of God! To how great a danger are they every day exposed! And, which is a part of their misery, they know it not: Spiritual Death has closed their eyes, and they see not where they go. What a
sad

sad object is a poor sinner, that is yet a stranger to this God; that is every hour liable to his Eternal Wrath; that seeks the Friendship and the Favour of men, and has no thoughts of his Creator, no dread of his Displeasure, no taste or relish of his Love! Surely they must be fallen into a dead sleep, whom all the Terrors of the Lord, all the Threats of his Word, and all the Calls of his Ministers will not awaken! With what peace can you eat and drink, or work, or rest, whilst so great a God is your Enemy? Will his Wrath, that makes the Devils in their Hellish Agonies to roar and tremble, be tolerable to you? When his Vengeance pursues you, whither will you run for help? When he frowns, what will it avail you, tho all the world should smile upon you? When he casts you off, who will shew you pity? When he condemns you, who will plead your Cause? Do you not know that your Life is short, that your Change is near, that the Judge is at the door? Do you not know that this World will leave you, that you may quickly go into another? And can you dwell with Eternal Burnings? Can you venture to go to the Judgment-Seat, before you have an Interest in Christ? Are you fruitless and barren here, and do you think to flourish in the Cœlestial Paradise? Do you remain dead here under all the means of Grace, and do you hope to live for ever? What pleasures are those that enchant you, that you will not come and taste the Joys of God? Who is that that will be a better Friend than he? If you laugh at destruction, it will not be the further

ther off: Oh let not the Devil be your Master, nor the world your God. Let not sin cheat and impose upon you with its false and counterfeit Delights. Others are mourning in secret after the Lord; and have you not as much cause to mourn as they? Others are striving with earnest Prayers and Supplications, and holy Endeavours, to enter in at the strait gate; and will it open of it self to you? Or have you not also Souls to save, as well as they? Others Read, and Hear, and Pray, and do all that they can for Salvation, being afraid they should fall under the Power of Eternal Death; and have you no cause of fear? VVhence is it, that when they are running so fast in the way of Heaven, you run faster in the way of Hell? VVhy do you with so great a care, tend and regard your Bodies to preserve them from pain, and yet suffer your Souls to languish and pine away? If you did but know how miserable you are, without the Favour of God, it would create a vast horror in your thoughts: How deeply would you groan, if you were but sensible of the vast load of Guilt that is upon you! How earnestly would you cry for help, if you did but see whither you are sinking, and where you are like to be for ever! How would you start, if you did but perceive that the Devil flatters you, that he may destroy you! That it is his work you do, his Lusts that you embrace, his Designs that you comply withal! There is no Dungeon so doleful, no Place so full of Torment, no Fire so hot, as that whither he leads you; and which will be more insupportable to you, be-
cause

cause you let him lead you captive at his own pleasure. If we receive any Life from God, let us bewail our Dead ; let us pity them that have no pity for themselves ; let our eyes, and our hearts melt and be troubled for them, tho they will not shed any tears for the sadness of their own case.

Inf. 7. *Hence we see the Reason why some grow more in Grace than others do , and are also more serviceable in the world.* Fear and sadness damp and contract our Spirits, but joy and comfort dilate them, and cause them to act with spriteliness and vigour: The Displeasure of God weakens the Faculties and Powers of the Soul, by the terrible apprehensions which it is then fill'd withal ; but his favour-bringing life fills it with delight ; and Faith is then strong and unmov'd, when it can behold God, his Son, and the Promises, all as her own Portion. Love is then genuine and durable, when it has a warm sense of the Love of God ; and under the constraining power and force of this, the heart is dissolved into a tender Sorrow, and a true Repentance: It is the shining of the Face of God, that makes us active for his Glory, and unwearyed in his Service: And under his pleasant and reviving Beams, the Christian travels with delight and haste to his dearly-beloved home: But when this Favour is eclips'd, this Sun covered with a cloud, then the poor Christian is as one who travels in the darkness of the night, and has lost his way ; he is full of fear and perplexity ; and so is the deserted Soul ; but the first Beam of day makes him to go on, and to finish
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his Course ; and then is accomplished that promise, Isa. 35. 1, 2. *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing, &c.* The Favour of God is as dew upon the grass, it causes fruit where there was nothing but withering and decay before. According as he is pleased to favour us, or to be displeased, so there is either a great Ease, or Restlessness and Indisposition on our Spirits: His Favour excites Admiration and Praise, and Love and Joy ; and with these cheerful Affections a man may do a great deal for God. Whereas, most usually, with our departing Comforts, does our strength depart ; what can we do for the Salvation of others, if we are under great fear that we our selves shall not be saved ? How can we work in the Vineyard, if we fear that our Master will in Anger cast us out ? Psal. 51. 11. *Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.* v. 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.* And so it is, as it 1. Delivers us from those Lusts and Corruptions which chain us down, that we cannot run the way of God's Commandments. 2. As it keeps us from being intangled with the affairs of the world, that subjugate and enthrall our minds. 3. As it is in us a Spirit of Adoption, and frees us from those slavish Fears of the Justice, and Sovereignty, and Holiness, and Power of God, which overwhelm our hearts. Job 22. 26. *Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God: Thou shalt pray unto him,*
and

and he shall hear thee. It gives us access to the Throne of Grace; it takes off our unwillingness to, and our restraint in holy Duties; it gives a freedom and enlargement of Soul; and it is then, as the flower that opens it self to the shining Sun. † Tho a man suffer no alteration in his Constitution, or his outward appearance, yet if God withdraw, all greatly decays within. When the Spirit came upon *Saul*, 1 Sam. 10. 6. *He prophesied, and was turned into another man.* He was inspired with greater courage, and had a disposition more Heroical, and better qualified; but when this Spirit was taken away, an evil Spirit succeeded in his room; then *Saul* was no more the same, nothing but fear, and horror, and despair, and vexation, ragged in his breast; he was in all respects a very miserable man; he had the name of a King, but was divested of all Royal Qualities, when he was left of the God of *Israel*, and went to ask Advice of the Witch of *Endor*; see his own Complaint, 1 Sam. 28. 15. *I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams.* Does not every Christian find it by his experience, that he is not the same in his Duties at one time, that he is at another? Sometimes his heart melts under a sense of the Love of God, and he feels such a vital Influence of the Spirit, that it seems as the Foretaste of Heaven; he seems to be even swallowed up with Joy; he seems to be within the Courts of God, and to set his foot within the Land of Promise: Oh who can express the

† See Mt. Burrough's Gracious Spirit, p. 20.

sweetness that spreads over all the panting Soul, when it sees the Face of God ! it lives then indeed, but hardly knows whether it be in the body or out of it ; so many wonders of Grace and Mercy does it view ! And yet this same person that is now in Triumph at the Gate of Heaven, may at another time be bewailing its own case, and in deep sorrows, as at the very door of Hell. When the Dew of God ceases to fall upon it, it looks no more so fresh and so fair, but sighs and groans for her Saviour ; tho a little while ago she could say, *I am my beloved's, and he is mine.* The same person may look upon God as a Judge, that before thought him to be a Father. The Life (as one says) which God gives his servants, may be weakned ; but 'tis never extinguish'd ; there is oftentimes upon them a spiritual fainting, tho not a total Death : when the Spirit does not produce any chearful motion, nor display any of his usual Beams of Light ; so that they are tost between Fear and Hope, between the sentiments of Life, and the apprehensions of Death. What dryness, what hardness, comes upon our hearts ? How little Lite, or Enlargement, or Comfort, have we in duty, when the Spirit of God is withdrawn from us ? All our endeavours, all our strivings with our selves, do not warm our Spirits, as he used to do. How little delight have we in Prayer ? And how loth are we to pray ? And we know how lame and defective our Petitions and Desires are : And we are at as great a loss as Job, when he said, *chap. 23. 3, 4. Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even*

to his seat. And v. 8. *I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him, &c.*

Inf. 8thly and Lastly. Hence you see the reason, why the Servants of God do so earnestly beg this favour, and are so deeply troubled when it is removed: It is their life, their portion, their all: Every thing is strangely changed; all its Comeliness, and Beauty, and Glory, vanishes, when the Life is gone: Life is the pleasant thing; 'tis sweet and comfortable; but Death with its pale attendants, raises an horror and aversion to it every where: The Saints of God dread the removal of his favour, and the hidings of his face; and when it is hid, a faintness, and a cold amazement and fear seizes upon every part, and they feel strange bitterness, and anguish, and tribulation, which makes their joints to tremble, and is to them as the very pangs of death. Psal. 22. 14, 15. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.* Psal. 38. 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10. And Job 23. 8, 9. Psal. 13. 1, 3, 4. Psal. 27. 9. *Hide not thy face from me; put not thy servant away in anger; thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God.* Psal. 69. 17. *Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily.* Psal. 4. 6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

C H A P. III.

Shewing, that the Favour of God is diligently to be sought; and what is to be done, that we may obtain it.

I. **S**EEING in the Favour of God is Life, seek it earnestly. If I were to bid you to take care of your Lives, or your Estates, you would quickly think it a needless Request, because your own safety and interest would prompt you to it: but if we bid you to take care of your Souls, there indeed you can hear one Sermon after another, one Exhortation after another, and still be as secure and careless as before. VVe hear many People wishing for other things, and very few that are desiring this. VVe hear the Poor say, Oh that I were rich! The Sick, Oh that I were well! And the Prisoner-fighting for his liberty; the Trader busily concerned for his gain; and the Merchant for good returns; but oh, how few are there that are saying, Oh that I might find grace in the sight of God! Oh that I might be his, and he mine! Many have their eyes fixed upon the World, admiring and doating on it, though they daily see how vain it is, and how its fashion passes away: but oh! how few are there whose eyes are fixed on Heaven? and whose hearts are panting after the Living God! If I could teach you a way to be the Favourites of the King, or of some Powerful, or Great Men, you would think to derive great Advan-
tages.

tages from such a Privilege, and quickly strive to get it: but here is a greater than they, even the King of kings, whose Favour is tendered to your acceptance, and your choice; his Throne is accessible; tho his Majesty might confound you, yet his Goodness bids you welcome to his presence: *Seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* And methinks every Soul here should rejoice, even to know, that it is possible for him to have God to be his own God. That how abject, how sinful soever he may have been, yet he may be advanced and honour'd by the Lord of glory, if he do but return; and when he bids us seek his face, we should answer, *Thy face Lord will we seek*; Psal. 27: 8. and seek it presently, while he may be found; lest Sicknes, and Death, and Judgment, should prevent us; and lest grieved with our delays, he should cover himself from us by an Eternal Separation, and we should seek him, and not find him: and because we did not hear his Calls, he should shut out all our cries; *And laugh when our calamity comes like an armed man*; Prov. 1. 28. If you have no need of him to forgive your Sins, to heal your Souls, to protect you from danger, or to bring you to Salvation, then let this Work alone; then be unconcerned, whether you seek his favour, or disesteem it; whether he be your Friend, or your Enemy: but if you have need of God, as I am sure you have; then pour out your supplications to him for his Grace; and say, O Lord, I have been dead in sin, but I know that nothing is impossible to thee. Thou openest the Graves,

and makest even the Dead to live. Let my Soul feel thy Almighty power, and have a share in the first Resurrection, that over me the second Death may not prevail. O let me be one of thy Children; one of thy blessed Family; one whom thou lovest, and whom thou wilt love for ever: thou hast pardoned many who were once as guilty as I have been; O magnify the Riches of thy Grace in blotting out mine Iniquities: Thou hast quickned many that were once dead; Let me also be quickened by the vital influences of thy Spirit. Many Prodigals hast thou received; Let me not be thrown off. Many hast thou blessed; many Blessings hast thou in store: *Therefore bless me, even me also, I pray thee, O my God.*

2. Joyn Endeavours to your Prayers, and use all the means of grace with conscionable diligence: 2 Cor. 5. 9. *We labour, that whether present, or absent, we may be accepted of him.* Psal. 119. 58. Oh do not mock him with a meer form of words! but let your affections and your words be joined together: be as the Hart, that when it pants for the Waterbrooks, runs with all the speed it can thither: when your Souls are once warmed with a sense of God, use all the care you can to maintain the sacred and the comfortable Flame, lest by your neglect it be extinguish'd and go out again. For a man to wish that he had the favour of God, and not to use all his prescribed means, is foolish, and ineffectual; as if a Traveller should sit in a lazy posture, without any motion in the Road, and yet wish to be at his Journeys end; as if a man
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should wish to be learned, and yet never read or study: as if a Soldier should wish for victory, and yet never fight: or an Husbandman for a gainful Crop, and yet neither plow nor sow. It is not a careless wish for God's favour, that will serve the turn; you must pray constantly, and resort to those places of Worship where he usually manifests his presence in his own Ordinances; and read his word with reverence, humility and frequency; you must seek him with your whole heart; you must expect and wait, tho it be long, for a gracious answer of your Prayers: how many days will men give their attendance for some Preferment, or High Place, in a Prince's Court! And it should not grieve us to stay for the Favour, and the Love of God; for when it is once bestowed, it will requite all your pains and labour; 1 Cor. 15. last verse. You will meet in the quest of this, with manifold trials, and with great oppositions; your Carnal Nature, and your old Sins will present motives to your sense to draw you back. *Satan* will perplex you with a thousand doubts and troubles; for you may be sure this Lyon will roar, when he is like to lose his Prey: but nothing of this must discourage you. The Favour of God is so great a mercy, that you may justly be importunate and restless till you get it, notwithstanding all the dangers that you meet withal. No great things are obtained, but with difficulty: you'll see hereafter, that it was worth the while to take pains in a matter of so great consequence. You now find, that after all the pleasure of Sin is past, it leaves a sting, and fills

your minds with bitterness and trouble; but you'll hereafter find nothing but comfort, nothing but an overflowing-pleasure in the love of God: and you'll find it to be so very pleasant, that you will wish that you had done more for him than you have done. There's not a Soul in Heaven that repents of the pains he took to get thither.

3. *You must be deeply sensible of your own miserable and undone state without it.* Luke 5. 31. *They that are whole, need not a Physician, but they that are sick.* Matth. 18. 11. *The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost.* Job 33. 27. *He looketh upon men; and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not; he will deliver his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light.* If you are once convinced, that your sins have made him angry; that his Anger is very just; and yet so severe, that if it continue, it will be intolerable. If you are once sensible what a great God you have provoked; what an holy Law you have broken; what an Hell you have deserved; you will reckon it as a great mercy that you are not already there, whence there is no return. If your Conscience have been awakened with a deep impression of his Wrath, all the Riches, the Honours, and the Pleasures of this World, will seem to you to be very poor and empty things. The sight of Sin that has deceived you, that has defiled you, that has exposed you to so great danger, will fill you with shame and sorrow, with fear and trouble. Of all your desires, this will be your chief, and your only desire;

fire; Let me have the Favour of God, whatever else I want: Let me have his Favour, or I dye for ever: you will be restless and unsatisfied till you have the hope of this. The reason why men are so industrious for all other things, and so little concerned for the Favour of God, is, because they are blinded by the Devil, and their own Lusts, and under a spiritual insensibility. But if you once find Sin to be bitter, this will be very sweet: If that has thrown you into painful Agonies, and deep distress of Soul, this will greatly comfort and revive you: you will see then great cause to humble, and to loath your self; and not find any cause of pride, or of the boast of the *Pharisee*; but in the better posture and temper of the *Publican*, say, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*. Never did a Traveller, after a tedious Journey, more desire his home; or a Mariner, long tost with Tempests, to see the quiet Shore, than you will desire this Favour of God. When you have been scorcht with inward thirst, you will pant for this Fountain of Love, wherein you may quench your thirst; when you have been in a long war with God, and come at length to see the danger of it; Oh how beautiful will be the feet of those who are Ambassadors of Peace! You will then say, as it is in *Luke 1.53*. *He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.*

4. *The Favour of God is only to be had in, and through Jesus Christ; and you must apply your selves to him for it.* It is not all your Zeal, your Repentance, your Self-denial, or your Mortifications, that of themselves will be sufficient to bring

bring you to the Favour of God: Tho you labour in his Service all the day, and mourn for your Miscarriages all the night, what satisfaction will this give to his offended Justice, and to the honour of his violated Law? We were happy indeed at our first Creation, in his Love; and happy had we been still, had we persevered: but our first Apostacy, by the fall from that Innocent Condition, has made a large breach between God and us; and there is none found in Heaven, or in Earth, that can make it up, but his only Son. The loss of Original Righteousness has made us to lose his Favour, and occasioned a vast distance between him and us; this has brought forth all the miseries of the World: Irregular Seasons, overflowing Inundations, and dreadful Wars; all the sickness and pain of our Bodies, and all the guilt, and inquietness, and disorder of our Souls: in *Adam* we all died; both natural and spiritual death came upon all, because all have sinned; but God has in his mercy not left us hopeless. As soon as *Adam* fell, He was pleased to provide for his rising again; and as soon as ever he had wounded himself, he did prepare a Balsom to heal and cure his Wounds; and when he was stung, and poisoned with the Venom of the Serpent, he did prepare an Antidote. The poor guilty Creature could have expected nothing but a Curse, and yet God gave him the Promise of Redemption, and of a Blessing by the Seed of the Woman that should break the Serpent's head: when he drive *Adam* out of Paradise, he might have put him out of Heaven, and out of his Presence
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for evermore; and have said, Go and dwell with that Devil that tempted thee to sin. Upon the Fall, he withdrew indeed his usual Favour; this raised a cloud that obscured the beauty of his morning-glory, and that intercepted the beams that a little while before shone upon his head: but tho we had destroyed our selves, in God was our help: He sent his own Son to dye for us, to give a satisfaction to his Justice, which would otherwise have flamed against us: and *though we are enemies, yet he is willing to reconcile us by the death of his Son*; Rom. 5. 10. It is by him that he will treat with us; to him must we address our selves; as being ordain'd of God to make our peace: To his Righteousness must we look, as being very sensible, that our own at the best is miserably defective: If our Persons, and our Services be accepted, it must be through his Beloved; he is the Principal, and the great Favourite of Heaven: all the mercy that we need, will be bestowed for his sake alone; all the miseries that we deserve, will he keep from us: it pleases God to behold what Christ has done; he will be pleased with us, if we are in him. It is the Blood of Jesus, and the merit of his Death, and our application of these by faith, that will reinstate us in his Favour: and 'tis the power and the virtue of his Intercession that will preserve us in it. Christ is *the way, and the truth, and the life*; 'tis he that will conduct and lead us to his Father; and make him that was our Enemy, because of our Sin, to be our Friend again. It is his Office, as a Mediator, and a Saviour,

Saviour, to heal the Wounded, to reduce the Wanderers, to call home the banished, to make the Lame to walk, and the blind to see; *Isa. 61.1.* and our blessed Lord is willing to plead our Cause, and to help our Wants; for those that come unto him, he will in no-wise cast out; if you believe, his Father shall be your Father; and his God your God: for God has resolved, that all the communication of his Grace shall be made through his dearly beloved Son; and if you do sincerely beg his Favour for Christ's sake, you shall not be denied: *He that hath the Son, hath life.* You shall indeed flourish, when you are united to this great and glorious Head; and the death that you found by the first, shall be removed by the second *Adam*: *As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; 1 Cor. 1. 22.* The Office of our Redeemer in Heaven is still to be a Reconciler; and not all the Angels, or the Saints there, can do for us what he does. When you are complaining of the yet remaining defilement and power of Sin, and saying with the great Apostle, *Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Then remember that there is help laid upon one that is mighty; one that is compassionate, and hath a tender sense of all your griefs and miseries; and therefore when you are amazed with the view of your own guilt, terrified with the Accusations of your own Consciences, and perplexed with the violent Assaults and Temptations of the Devil; when you are afraid you shall be the Stubble to the devouring Wrath of God, then lay hold of his

his strength, *Isa. 27. 5. i. e. on Christ who is the power of God, and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1.*

24. And it may be said of you, as in *Ephes. 2. 12. Though in time past ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the World: but now in Christ Jesus, you who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace.*

5. *That you may have an interest in the favour of God, which is Life, your natures must be renewed:* It is not enough that your Consciences are delivered from guilt, and from an obnoxiousness to punishment; but they must also be delivered from the dominion and the power of sin. If your Lusts are unsubdued, they will by their unquiet and disorderly motions create an Hell within, and then you cannot expect an Heaven without; if you relish only temporary, carnal joys, you must not expect to taste the Joy of God; nor think, that if you will wallow in the mire, that he will place you on his Throne. Tho' his Sun gives refreshment with his chearful beams to all the World, to the bad as well as to the good; yet the beams of his special favour will not shine upon a Dunghil, nor visit those hearts which are full of all manner of pollution: his pure and holy nature will not allow him to behold iniquity with approbation. Think not to see the reviving smiles of his face, so long as you turn your backs upon him, so long as you love what he abhors; so long as without any remorse or grief, you scorn his Government,

vernment, and violate his Laws. Till you are born again by the Spirit of God, you are in a state of death, and are unfit for the communications of the Divine favour. You are in that condition, no members of the Body of Christ; for all that are joynd to that glorious Head, have life and strength from him to mortify their Lusts. *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. There is no Communion between God and you, till your natures, your inclinations, your principles, your designs are all changed from what they once were. *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness,* Psal. 11. 7. Till you have his image, and a resemblance of him wrought in you by the Holy Ghost, you are not his favourites, nor such in whom he can take a peculiar delight; without holiness, his presence will not seem amiable to you; or at least without it, you cannot see his face. Isa. 59. 1, 2. *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you.* And therefore they are compared to a thick Cloud, they obstruct and dim the light that otherwise would shine upon your heads. Therefore David prays, *Create in me a clean heart;* and then, *restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,* Psal. 51. 10, 12. Whilst sin is lodged and entertained in the soul, it is like wind in the bowels of the Earth, it will cause Convulsions and troublesome agitations there. It was the sin of Adam that made so many frowns in the face of God; that caused the
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the first eruption of his Wrath ; that makes it so frequently to flame out with terror against the guilty Sons of Men. Till you are born again, you will have an aversion to God ; And how can you expect that his favour should be given to you, whilest you care not to think of him ? Till your darkness be removed, and you be acquainted with him , you cannot be at peace.

VI. That you may have the favour of God, you must in conformity to the new Nature, and those holy dispositions that you receive by his Grace, yield him a sincere and a constant obedience all your lives. *His countenance doth behold the upright*, Psalm. 11. 7. He encourages the weakness of that Soul that is tender and afraid of sin ; he will not treat you with the kindness that he shews to his honourable Subjects, if you take part with his open enemies : *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*, Joh. 15. 14. Obedience is the genuine effect of so excellent and so near an alliance ; and 'tis the proof and evidence thereof. Joh. 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and doth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my father, and I will love him.* And vers. 23. *We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* A Promise full of Mercy ! Words that have in them all that is desirable, that are big with consolation ! What can a soul wish for more, than to have God, the Father and the Son, to have them for his Friends, for his Guests ! and not only to tarry for a night or a day, but for ever ! Not to com-
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fort him with a transient visit, which were a great privilege; but to dwell with him! Oh! blessed is the House that hath such Inhabitants; and blessed is the Soul who is thus honoured and esteemed. By obeying his Commands, you shew your selves to be vessels of Honour; and when you are so, he will at one time or other fill you brim-full of Joy. If you serve the Devil, you can by no means have that satisfaction that flows from the hope of being a Son of God, and an Heir of Heaven: And tho' his Showers fall upon the Sands, as well as on the manured and cultivated ground; yet till you are fruitful, you cannot expect to be refresh'd with his gentle and comfortable Dews. There are peculiar influences of his Grace that fall upon his inclosed Gardens, and not upon the Deserts. *If favour should be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness, Isa. 26. 10.* It shines like the Sun on a Rock; he is no more fruitful, no more tender-hearted than he was before; if you embrace your ancient Sins, if you hold on your correspondence with your former Lusts, God will not pour the oyl of gladness into such old and depraved hearts; if we go on in sin, we violate our own serenity, and raise within our breasts a multitude of storms; whereas, *Psal. 119. 165. Great peace have they which love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.* And so, *Gal. 6. 16. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.* *Isa. 64. 15. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.* By these means you shall obtain the favour of God, and when you have so obtained it;

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

Shewing that we ought to take heed that we do not lose the favour of God after we have once enjoyed it ; and what we are to do, that we may not fall into a condition so miserable as this would be.

7. **T**AKE great heed that you do not lose the favour of God again. It is true indeed, that those whom God once loves, he loves to the end ; they are not suffered totally to be miserable ; but yet they may lose the sense of his favour, and all the comfort that once flowed from the pleasant thought, That he was their God. Those that have sailed with a very prosperous gale, may, upon their negligence, be tost with very many storms, and may be terrified with a Thousand dangers and calamities, whilst they do not see the Sun, Moon and Stars for many days and nights together ; and tho' they do not at length fall short of Heaven, yet they may travel as through a Wilderness in their way thither, and not meet with those clusters of the promised Land, with those joys and comforts that others meet withal. The Spirit may suspend his influences, and leave the Conscience in a very lamentable state, and take away the peace that he once gave ; so that the poor soul in that condition, cannot but look upon it self with as sad an eye as if it were a reprobate ; and great difficulties and dangers there are ere
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the Spirit return again to repair the breaches which our sin hath made. The disorders of our souls afterwards remain a great while, and it will cost us vast labour to remove them; as when some River that is very muddy has overflowed the neighbouring Fields, tho' it do return to its ordinary Channel, yet it nevertheless leaves those places all covered with slime and dirt. The least Eclipse of the Face of God is a very formidable thing, 'twill shake all the powers of your souls, and put you into such terror as will seem to be like Hell it self. If you be so foolish, as upon slight temptations to forfeit his favour, you'll dearly pay for that folly; you may do that in a moment, that may fill you with astonishment and sorrows all your days, and make you go at last mourning to the Grave. You may by a sudden fall have your Bones broken, and it may be, never again recover your former ease and strength; do not therefore wound nor bruise your selves. If you are not very careful, that Candle of the Lord that shines upon your Tabernacle, may be removed, and then you'll know by a sad experience, that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against him. Tho' you now do not question your title to Salvation, yet you shall then be full of doubts and fears; tho' you are now looking to God as to a Friend, yet you shall then be forced to look upon him as an Enemy; and think your afflictions, not the rebukes of a Father, but of an angry Judge. He will be indeed the same God still, as full of Goodness and of Love; but to you he will be as a Fountain

tain sealed up, and your poor mourning souls, like the Mountains of *Gilboa*, curst and barren, there will be no Dew nor Rain upon them. Tho' you are never so flourishing now, yet then the sharpness of the Winter will blast all your Fruit, that the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be any fruit in the Vine, and the labour of the Olive shall fail. Consider how great was the sorrow of *David*, when God was for a season departed from him ! How many were his Tears, how heavy his Complaints, and how sad his Thoughts ! Tho' he was (as 'tis usually judged) of a sanguine and a merry temper, and had a peculiar skill in Musick, which is the usual allayer and charm of Grief; yet in the sense of God's displeasure, his Joy was turned into Lamentation, his Harp and those Songs with which he had driven away the melancholly of *Saul*, could not stifle or chase away trouble from his own soul; the Storm was too loud to listen to those softer Airs; the Wound was too deep to be Cured by those gentle and easie Methods. Beware lest you lose the sense of the Favour and the Love of God; lest you make your Heavenly Father to visit you with painful Rods, and severe Afflictions. Take heed that you do not weaken yourselves; *for the joy of the Lord is your strength*, Neh. 8. 10. Is it not motive enough to say, that his Favour is your Life, and his Displeasure is your Death? Let us but take as much pains for our spiritual, as for our natural Life, and all will be very well. When we find the least decays of Nature, we are very industrious

to repair them; when we find the least faintness or indisposition on our spirits, we have recourse to Cordials, or to something that is very comfortable and reviving, to refresh them; when we are sick, we complain of our illness, we make abundance of inquiries, and use a great deal of care to know what it is that will do us good; we have a great value for our dear Life, and are afraid of every thing that may deprive us of it; and when we are in Health, What do we not attempt for our own preservation! What Arts do we use! What provisions do we make for Meat, and Drink, and Cloaths, and Houses, and Gardens, and other accommodations, that we may live at ease! And (my Friends) is not our Soul of more worth than the Body? Are not its decays, and its death, more painful, and more intolerable than all the languishing and decays of our outward Man? Let us therefore, as we have a great horror of natural death, have no less for that which is spiritual: Let us keep, with a greater care, the Favour of God, that is our Spiritual and Eternal Life. And that we may not lose it,

1. *Let us not grieve his Holy Spirit*, Ephes. 4.30. Tho' we are not so happy, as to have a familiar Conversation with Christ, as those had who enjoyed his presence here on Earth, tho' he be withdrawn from our eyes, and we see him not in his exalted and glorified state; yet he has sent his Spirit to dwell in our hearts, and we ought, with all manner of obedience and respect, to treat and entertain so Divine a Guest;

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to do nothing that is unsuitable to so great a Presence; not to pollute our selves, nor to defile his Temple with any sort of sin, lest we grieve and vex him. The Divine Nature, indeed, is incapable of our passions, 'tis above our joys and our sorrows; and as 'tis said of those that are upon Mount *Olympus*, they see the Clouds gather below their feet, they see the Hail and the Thunder disturb and lighten on the Plain, whilst they rejoice in the pure light of the Sun: In such manner the Divine Essence sees all the troubles and agitations of the Creatures, remaining always in its own peace and tranquility. * This expression is bor-

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rowed from humane affections; and when the *Serm. Sur.*
Holy Spirit does that in us, which our nature *Eph. 4.30.*
does when it is seized with sorrow, then he is *P. 29.*

said to be grieved: And if we make him sad, we cannot expect that he will make us to rejoice; if we affront and abuse him, he will not be our comfort; if he retire, all our Evidences will be covered with darkness, and we shall be plunged in the lowest depths. Let us therefore obey all his suggestions; whatever he bids us do, let us do; let our minds always be yielding to his good, and profitable motions; let us not slight the Revelation he hath made, nor be unmindful to grow in all the Graces that are pleasing to him; let us remember the kindness that he does us, how he chases away our darkness; and when we are fainting, how seasonably he does apply the Promises, and brings to our remembrance those Truths that are most suitable and refreshing to us; let us not

grieve him by neglecting to read or meditate upon the Word which he endited ; or by foolish Communications, by rash Angers, or Malice, or Bitterness, or Wrath, or Contention. *Ephes. 4. 31.* but let him be the absolute Master of our souls ; when we are afflicted, let us not grieve him by our murmuring, or impatient complaints in our afflictions ; nor by security and hardness of heart in our prosperity : And when he would carry us towards Heaven on the wings of spiritual desire and love, let us not suffer our selves to be seduced by the World, the Devil, or the Flesh ; and if we obey him, he will maintain a sense of the Divine Favour on our souls ; and the Life that he will give us, will not be like that of the sick, the feeble, and the dying ; but like the Life of the most strong and healthful.

2. *Let us beware of Spiritual pride :* The contrite and humble are those that he regards : The proud he looks upon afar off, *Psal. 138. 6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly : but the proud he knoweth afar off.* That is, with disdain, and scorn. 'Tis nothing but our ignorance that makes us Proud : We are ignorant of God, and of the multitude and greatness of our Sins ; were it possible for us to be Proud, if we frequently considered the Great Majesty of God, and our own Vileness ! His Holiness, and our Pollution ! His Almighty Power, and our Weakness ! His Glory, and our Darkness ! His Eternity, and our own fading being ! What comparison can be made between the Great Ruler of the World, and us
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that dwell in houses of clay? It was a mighty Condescension in our Blessed Lord, and one of the chiefest parts of his Humiliation; to be cloathed with our Nature, that is in it self so mean and low: And as one says, "The whole
"World, from East to VVest, lies very sick;
"but to cure this very sick world, there de-
"scends an Omnipotent Physician, who hum-
"bled himself, even to the assumption of a
"Mortal Body, as if he had gone into the Bed
"of the diseased. 'Tis an Ignorance of our
selves, that is the cause of our Pride; we re-
member not, how often it is that we offend
in Thought, VVord, and Deed: How we are
by Nature children of wrath! And how we
make our selves more so, by repeated acts of
Sin. God resists the Proud, but he hath a re-
gard to the Contrite and Humble Soul; Isa. *He*
fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends
empty away, Luke 1. 53. All on whom he be-
stows his Favour, he first convinces of their
own misery; shews to them the Curse, the Hell,
the Condemnation that they have deserved:
and when they are pardoned after such a sight,
that Pardon fills them with low, and self-abas-
ing thoughts; and when he comes to embrace
them, he finds them in the posture of the poor
Prodigal, Luke 15. 18, 19. *Father, I have sinned*
against heaven, and before thee, and am no more wor-
thy to be called thy son. One sight of the face of
God will dash all our Confidence, and lower
all our Pride; and the more this is revealed, and
discovered to the Souls of the Faithful, the more
they see cause to loath and abhor themselves in

dust and ashes. Hence it is that our Apostle that knew so much of God, was so very humble; saying, *1 Cor. 15. 10. By the grace of God I am what I am—I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* He calls himself the chief of Sinners, and admires the grace of our Lord, that towards him was exceeding abundant; *1 Tim. 1. 14.* And elsewhere he styles the mercies of the Gospel, the exceeding riches of the grace of Christ; *Eph. 2. 7.* As ever you would have the favour of God continued, strive against all pride. A man is then proud, 1. When he attributes that to himself, to his own Industry, Wisdom or Prudence, which he hath received from God. 2. When he attributes to, or expects that by merit, which is a free gift. Or, 3. When he thinks he hath that which he hath not. Or, 4. When he despises others, and affects preheminance. It is usual with us to take the measures of Pride from the garb or attire, from the outward behaviour, gesture, or the use of some less grave or decent Fashions; and indeed there may be an excess in these things that may be very justly blameable: But, my Friends, there is a Pride worse than all this, even spiritual Pride, that hath in it the very Image of the Apostate Spirit, and is truly Diabolical; when a man is proud of the Graces, or the Gifts of God, it alienates from him the Divine Favour, for which we are more prepared, when we are covered with shame and sorrow: And when we are poor in spirit, then we may hope that he will enrich us with his Love. When we are emptied of all Self-conceit,

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or a flattering opinion of our own Actions, then we may hope that he will fill us both with grace and glory. VVhat a sorry unbecoming thing is it for a man, even the best of men, to be proud ! Alas ! How soon can the Great God cause all his glory to wither, and to fade away ! What a vain thing is it for a man to pride himself in things that relate to the Body, when it is liable to Agues, Fevers, Consumptions, Convulsions ; and many tedious days and years of pining sickness, and must at last be the prey of death, and moulder in the Grave ! And it is no less evil and foolish for a man to pride himself in any thing that relates to his Soul ; in his knowledge, in his faith, in his serviceableness ; for upon his sin, an hour of temptation may come upon him, that will be an hour of darkness, that will cause the light of all these to vanish ; and what is man, when his Conscience is awakened with a sense of guilt, when his Sins are set in order before him, when the Devil is permitted to sift and vex him, to ruffle him with amazing Terrors, and the constant view of Hell ? If God depart from us, that Envious raging Spirit, who is of great power and malice, does with ease insult over us, and tread us under his feet. Oh ! how vain is it for us to be proud, that live a miserable life, and may dye a very painful death ! All the Designs of God are to exalt himself, and abase the Creature. The Consciouſness that the Saints have of their own Unworthiness, will produce an eternal admiration of his Love ; and they will all cast down their Crowns before the Throne ;

1 Cor. 4. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6.

3. *That you may not lose the Favour of God, you must beware of formality, and all slightness of spirit in the performance of holy duties :* It will be also very prejudicial to us, when we can omit them, and have no great trouble or regret for so great a Sin. Whereas, if we were duly tender of the welfare of our Souls, we should refresh them with frequent thoughts and meditations, as we do our Bodies, with two or three meals a-day. When we bring dead Sacrifices to the Altar of God, we need not wonder that we have so little spiritual and heavenly life ; we need not wonder that we have no more sense of his Favour, when we often pray for it, as if we prayed not ; the coldness and indifference of our Petitions shews, that we do not much care whether they be granted or denyed : and God will not thrust his Mercies upon us whether we will or not ; none shall enjoy his gracious comfortable Presence, but those that strive and wrestle ; and such as have the zeal of *Jacob*, that will not let him go till he bless them. Heaven and Salvation we would all have, but God knows we beg it after a very poor fashion ; and he may justly expel us from the sight of himself, because we draw near to him with so little fervour ; and give him cause to complain of us, as of those in *Isa. 29. 13.* We are guilty of slightness and formality in duty in these following Instances : 1. When we perform them as a task, and not with delight and love. 2. When we do

do not excite and stir up our selves to call upon the Lord. 3. When we are satisfied in the bare outward performance, and have not those inward exercises of contrition, faith, and holy sorrow, and vigorous desires, which are as the life and the soul of Prayer. 4. When we suffer our Thoughts to wander, or when we run to such Duties from a hurry, and a croud of worldly business, not considering the greatness of our wants, and of that Majesty that fills the Throne before which we pray, and how he will be sanctified of all that draw nigh to him. 5. When we look not for the answer of our Prayers; and when having done our duty, we are unsollicitous whether it produce any good effect or no. 6. When we are more studious to approve our selves to the eyes of Men, than to the eye of God. I might add, That if we would not lose the Favour of God, we must duly improve all his other Ordinances; we must hear as for our lives, and take heed that his word do not at any time slip out of our minds. We must receive the glad tidings of Salvation with obedient and joyful hearts: and upon all fit occasions, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, with holy Affections, and a melting zeal, keep up the remembrance of the Love of Christ till he come again; and with great constancy and seriousness read the Scriptures that direct us how to obtain this Favour of God that is our life: but if any person has so little value for the Favour of God, that he will not earnestly pray for it, he must go without it; and smart for his refusal of so excellent a Blessing, when it shall be too late to repent.

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4. *That you may not lose the Favour of God that is your life, you must avoid all sloth.* What pains hath God taken, what Exhortations, what Promises has he used to bring you near to himself? what hardships and sufferings did Christ undergo to gain your love? and will you do nothing in answer to that Favour of his that is so graciously bestowed, and so dearly bought? Be circumspect, and walk closely with your God; be ware of every thing that may stir up your Father's Anger; for though he will not throw off so kind a Relation, yet his Wrath is very terrible. I beseech you to be very fearful of all inward backslidings, and of spiritual decays: and lest the warmth of your first burning love to God wear away again, take heed lest the death that is in his displeasure, steal upon you by degrees; and lest from a less degree of zeal there come a total indisposition on your hearts; for when you once begin to slide, the descent is easie: as soon as ever you are sleepy, rouse your selves by those powerful motives that you may fetch from the Word of God, from his Promises, and from his Threats; slothful Servants will never have their Master's Approbation; you have good encouragement, manifold assistances, and the prospect of a great reward. Is your Joy, your Peace, your present Consolation, and your Hope, nothing worth? if it be, then let no Dangers, no Difficulties whatsoever make you to part with it; as knowing that it may cost you dear before you obtain it, if it once be lost. Take heed that you do not begin to lose your awful sense of God, that
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you do not grow bold with sin; take heed that you comply not with the Devil; who being forsaken of God, would have you to be so; and who being shut out of Heaven, would hinder your arrival there, or at least make you to go uncomfortably thither: if he cannot hinder your walking towards that *Jerusalem*, he will endeavour to make you halt, and to go with pain thither. But to prevent this, and all other his malicious Designs, be you *fervent in the spirit, serving the Lord*: And upon his first withdrawing, be you restless till you find him whom your Souls love. As you now flourish in the Courts of God, take heed that you do not blast your own Fruit: seeing you are fixed on the Rock of Ages, take heed that you do not pull up your own Anchor, and so your Vessel be driven on the Sands, and your hope shipwrackt. Make no excuses for your not working hard; use no delays; apply your selves to the most active and zealous endeavours, that so you may prevent your own sorrow: *For the field of the sluggard will be all grown over with thorns, and nettles will cover the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof will be broken down*, Prov. 24. 31. These Thorns are evil desires that will spring up of their own accord without sowing, they will encrease of themselves; and then you will be exposed without defence to every Invader, and to all the Birds of prey: and consider, 'That (as one says*) the
'Duties of godliness are not only a debt to God,
'but a reward to us; and in our sloth there is
'not unfaithfulness only, but ingratitude; both
'the Majesty and the Mercy of God is despised: P. 523.

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* Sym-
mond's
Deserted
Soul,

Remember what the Church saith, *Cant. 3. 1.* *By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not, &c.* She did not find him, for she sought amiss; no wonder she was not blessed with his presence, when she sought it in such a lazy manner; and therefore tho' she took pains afterwards, yet she did not meet with him: He chastised her former negligence with a longer absence, tho' there was no place which she did not frequent, no person of whom she did not ask, and yet heard no tidings of him; He that suffered on the Cross for her, might justly expect that she should leave her Bed and quit her ease for him, *Cant. 5. from v. 2, to 9.*

5. *That you may not lose the favour of God, which is your Life, take heed of an inordinate affection to this World, and sensual Delights:* If the care and business, the riches and projects of this World, take up your hearts, and the flower of your time, you will have but few thoughts of him, and consequently but a little Love; the more you advance in the mortification of your Appetites, and your dearest Lusts, the more chearful influences you'll find of his Grace. Beware that you love not any thing in this World too much; no Child, no Relation, no Creature-Comfort, lest he tear away these Idols from you, and the loss of an over-prized enjoyment vex your souls: He will have your whole hearts, and you must not think that he will shew you his favour, if you only give him one half, and share the other amongst the several objects that your mistaken affections doat upon.

upon. If you prize this favour of God, as you ought, you'll not too vehemently desire any present good, nor too sorrowfully bewail its departure from you; your Life will be in God, and not bound up in any of your Friends, lest when they dye, your peace and comfort dye at the same time. If the World be set upon the Throne, the disorder that is thereby offered to God, will cause him to frown, and to fetch the Rebel and Usurper thence, tho' with your smart and grief. Sensual pleasures will clog and vitiate your appetite, that you shall not so well taste, nor apprehend the sweetness that there is in God; if you have seen his face, the beauties and the glories of it will make all the World appear to you as a mean and despicable thing; as the Woman that was clothed with the Sun, had the Moon under her feet: You will see such an attractive excellence in Christ, that you will esteem him as *the chief of ten thousands*; and the tempting, fair-spoken World, will not be able to lead Captive that heart, which you have already given to a better Lord; and whilst others feed upon Husks, you will be treated with the Bread of your Father's House; whilst others pursue the drossy, short-liv'd pleasures of sense, you will have the delights of Angels, and of an Eternal Heaven to feed upon; and your splendid satisfaction, will keep you from envying them, whose ignorance makes them to be content with lower fare; and who, when they might fly as with the Wings of Eagles, chuse to grovel in the dust; and as the Moon then is Eclipsed, when the
Earth

Earth shadows it, and hinders its admission of the light of the Sun that makes it visible; and as in such an Eclipse, the nearer that Planet is to the Earth, the more durable is its darkness; so if we suffer an Eclipse of God's Favour, it is when this Earth interposes between him and us; when its false allurements and promises turn our Eyes downward, which should be always lifted up to that glorious Sun by whose light we see. This World is a more dangerous Enemy than we usually take it to be; and therefore the Apostle says, *If any man love it, the love of the father is not in him*, 1 Joh 2. 15. Its Joys are like those false Fires that wander up and down in a thick and foggy night, and which lead the deceived Traveller into some Pit or Gulf; but the Joys of God are like the brightness of a Summers day; their clearness, their comfortableness, and their continuance, render them worthy of our highest admiration. The smiles of the World, many times, cover a designed mischief; but the smiles of God are to make us happy. Whether then shall we most prize, the Fountain, or the polluted Streams? the rich Ocean, or the smaller Brooks? Why should we love the Creatures, when we have a God to love? Why should we doat upon a Bubble, that every little Storm blows away, and not embrace that Salvation that is offered? and that is both suitable to our faculties, and not liable to perish? With Angels and with glorified Saints, let us make God our all, our portion, and our hearts desire; for our great Creator is much more amiable than his own handy-

handy-work. Let us leave the Men that know not God, to fall down before their Idols of Clay and Dirt; but let us with the highest reverence, with the most cordial submission, adore him, from whose Favour we have life. Let us leave them to dig in the Bowels of this Earth for a sordid happiness; but let us arise and go hence. Let us go and seek after God; Let us go and seek till we find him; and when we have found him, let nothing in this World, no pleasure, no pain, no promises, no threats, nor life, nor death, make us part with our dear God again. Let us never cease to sigh and to long for him; Let us never be weary of his work, nor ever think that we can do too much for so good a Master: Let us feast our selves with the chearful expectation of his Eternal Love; and so take up the good resolution of the Church, *Cant. 4. 6. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.*

6. *That you may with more care seek and endeavour to obtain the Favour of God, improve your experiences to this purpose.* Have you not found what a pleasant thing it is to be near to him? to have access to his Throne? and to see his Face? And on the contrary, Have you not known what a dismal and uncomfortable state it is to be without him? And there are two sorts of Experiences that may be very serviceable to you in this great affair.

1. *Those Experiences that you have of all other things in common with the rest of Men: Have you*

not found, that the Promises and Friendships of this World have been very changeable? Have you not embraced many a time a Cloud, when you have promised your selves a real and a solid happiness? Has the World given you that pleasant entertainment, that cordial satisfaction that you proposed to your selves when you first let your minds run upon it? Have you not a Thousand times called it a very vain World? Have you not a Thousand times found it to be so? Have you not prick'd your hands, and vex'd your souls, when you thought to have gathered the pleasant flower that you doated on? Have you not seen that the most beautiful Rose is attended with a neighbouring Thorn? Has it smelt so sweet, and lasted so long as you once thought it would? Has not all your Wine had some Wormwood and Gall mingled with it? Has not every Comfort had a mixture of a Cross? and where you hoped for the greatest pleasures, have you not met with a sad allay of grief? Have you not been eager and importunate, and restless, for this or that creature-good? and when you have obtained it, has it been so suitable, so delightful, so every way amiable, as at a distance it did seem to be? He must be a young Man indeed, that hath not found this World to be a cheat; and he must be a Fool, that when he has been once cheated, will suffer himself to be again impos'd upon. A few years experience will make us all to say with the Wise Man, *That all is vanity and vexation of spirit*; and if we hope to extract more from it than so great an Observer of Nature as he,

he, did, we shall be miserably deceived. In our first and rash desires we flatter our selves with something here on Earth, that is great, and plausible, and charming ; but in our more sedate and second thoughts, we find that all that is under the Sun is but a shew, and a meer appearance : And when we find it to be so, as a great many have already, and all shall in a little time ; it becomes us to apply our selves to something that is more durable and satisfying, and that is only the Favour and the Love of God.

2. *Improve not only your common, but your Spiritual Experiences to this end and purpose.* I suppose there are a great many people here, that have been under distress of soul, and that in such distress have been brought very low ; Now, What was it, I pray you, that gave you relief in so sad a Case ? Was it that you had many Friends, and great Estates, and a flourishing Trade, and abundance of outward Accommodations ? I am sure you will answer, No, no ; none of these things gave us the least help. Methinks I hear you saying, We tried several methods for a Cure, we tried several diversions and pleasures, the Conversations of our Friends, and whatever innocent Recreation it was that we thought might give us ease ; we heard Sermons, we read good Books, we enquired of our Ministers, but we found them all to be *Physicians of no value* ; they did not open our Eyes, nor heal our Wounds, nor answer our Doubts, nor refresh our tired and weary Souls, till God himself was pleased to do it. Nothing in all the

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World

World did avail us; nor could all the means we used, pull out the Sting that the sense of our guilt and condemnation pierced us with; *Abanah* and *Pharphar*, all the Rivers of *Damascus*, and all the streams of sensual delights, were not able to mitigate or quench our thirst: All was desolation, and terror, and amazement; till his Face was pleased to shine through the threatening cloud. We lived in darkness, and in the deepest sorrows, till he became our light and joy; we were sinking, till he held us up; and dying, till he was pleased to revive us: All the delight and mirth that ever the World gave us, was but as a flash of Lightning to that clear and serene day that his Grace created in our hearts; his Love did, indeed, mitigate our pains, and remove our sores; and one beam from him was as the dawn of Heaven: He has fed us, like *John the Baptist*, with Honey in the Desert; his Loving-kindness did, indeed, quench our thirst. This I know is the sense of your Souls, that have tasted how good the Lord is; and having had so pleasant a relish of his Mercy, I beseech you, let not the remembrance of it wear away. Oh! remember with delight, the transports, the sweetness, and the satisfaction that you have found in God; the settlement, and the quiet that you have had, when you have cast your Anchor on the Rock of Ages: what views you have then had of the *New Jerusalem*, and what a pleasant prospect you saw when you were upon the Mount. Oh! remember how often you have fallen, and his kind hand has raised you up; how

how often you have been at the very Gates of the Grave, and he has been your Life; how often his Bowels have melted over you, when you were Rebellious; how often he has embraced you, when you were Prodigals; how often he has forgiven you, and bid you be of good comfort, when you did condemn your selves. You have found all the Creatures as the drop of the Bucket; and how unable so small a drop was to gratify your earnest longings, your pantings and desires; and that after many a weary step, you found no rest till he manifested himself, and gave you that composure and stillness, which in vain you sought from lower things. Have you not found more solace in an hours converse with God, in Prayers and Meditation, than in many days discourses with the best of Men? This World, I dare say, you have found to be worse and worse, the more you have tried it; but the clearer views you have had of God, have shewed you something in him still more and more excellent. How often have you come to hear his Word with entangled, perplexed thoughts, and he has sent you away refreshed and satisfied? How often have you with sad hearts, and mournful looks, kneeled down in your Closets, and have risen again, after having had communion with him, with great calmness and serenity? So that you have cried out, Oh! that I had known him sooner, and loved him with my first affections; for he very well deserves all my faculties, and all the powers of my soul. Remember the large experiences you have had of the goodness

of God ! With what kindness did he draw you at the first ! with what gracious Promises did he cherish your languishing and your feeble hopes ! How seasonably did he awaken you from the sleep of death, with his threats and calls, and seasonable chastisements ! How has he made your broken bones to rejoice ! How often has he enlarged your hearts in Duty, and you have felt so much of his Power and Presence, and in so comfortable and so sweet a manner, as if you had not only heard of him by the hearing of the ear, but seen him also with the seeing of the eye ! How often has he renewed his Mercy, when you thought he would never be favourable any more ! And how often, when your unbelief has made you say that he was departed, has he return'd again ! How often has he listened to your doleful cries, and given you many a proof of his love in the gracious answer of your Prayers ! How many times has your heart and flesh failed, and he hath given you support ! How many times have you been sorely tempted, and he has overthrown the Tempter ! How many Storms have put you into consternation, and he has appeared to your help, and said, *It is I, be not afraid* ! He has put you, it may be, into the Fiery Furnace ; but he has been with you there, and made even the severest Tryals to purge away your dross. He has corrected you with a very tender and a skilful hand, and has ordered, with a most exact Wisdom, all your troubles, both as to the nature of them, and as to their duration ; they have not been too heavy,

heavy, nor have they stayed too long, *Psal.* 119. 75. I speak as to wise men, judge you what I say. These Experiencies well remembred, will be a means to preserve you from losing the favour of God, which is your Life. As 'tis useful for your health to remember what hurt you, and what did you good heretofore; so these spiritual Experiences will be very beneficial: For may you not say with *David*, *Pf.* 119. 96. *I have seen an end of all perfections; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

C H A P. V.

Of Assurance. As also of the False Grounds upon which many are apt to conclude, that they are God's Favourites, when they are not so.

7. **E**Ndeavour to be assured that you enjoy God's Favour, that is your Life: Not only to believe that it is so, but to feel this animating your Faculties, and spreading it self through every part, that you may not only have his Countenance, but the Light of it; and that you may not walk in darkness, without the pleasant beholding of this Glorious and Reviving Sun. His Favour towards you, tho' it be undiscerned, will make you blessed; but nothing but the sense of it will cause you to rejoice. Tho' you be safe, yet it is very desire-

able to know that you are so ; not only to be going towards Heaven, but to see the Crown of Glory shining before your Eyes as you go along. It is very terrible, tho' God be your Father, if you cannot think of him, but as of a Judge. Fears and Doubts are disquieting and uneasie things ; the restlessness and the torment that they give you, should excite you to try all means whereby they may be removed. It is much better to have a vigorous and a stirring Life, than the sickly, feeble motions of it, that are scarcely discerned : As in *Apoplexies* and other Diseases, where the soul is retired inward, and the spirits have so cold a motion, that they scarcely make the Pulse to beat. What peace can you have without an evidence of your Interest in God ? What comfort from his Promises, if you know not whether they belong to you or not ? Will it enrich you to see large Treasures, if you have no share therein ? What tho' there are abundance of Fountains of Consolation, if you are like to perish and to die with thirst ? You must endeavour to have your hope, *as an Anchor that is both sure and stedfast*, Heb. 6. 19. And you have encouragements given you for an hope so sure. And (as one says) Hope were but a poor Anchor, if it should leave the soul to the courtesy of a Wave, to the clemency of a Rock, to the disposing of a Storm. Hope were but a weak Anchor, if it should let the soul be lost with uncertainties, or leave it in danger of Shipwreck. Be not satisfied that you think that God's Favour is your Life, till you can say with David, *He is the health of my countenance, and my God,*

God, Psal. 43. 5. and these two met together, will produce a very solid and a comfortable joy; when you can say with the Rapture of *Thomas, My Lord, and my God!* or with the Church, *I am my beloved's, and he is mine*; Cant. 6. 3. Use all the Ordinances, the Word, and the Sacraments to this purpose, that you may find him whom your Soul loves; Cant. 3. 3, 4. Oh what will be your pleasure, when you see the great God of Heaven to be your own God! to see that Saviour, of whom the Prophets, and Apostles, and Martyrs, and all your Ministers, and your Christian Friends, have spoke so much, to be at length your own Saviour! how will you be at ease, when you see his Excellencies to be yours! and that you are among the joyful and adoring-throng that wait upon him! To love him, and to have his love shewed to you, and to have these mutual Delights to increase, but never to decay; to possess one another for ever with renewed and repeated Extasies; this is an Heaven begun, that no thoughts can fully apprehend, nor words declare; in order to this, you must *give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*; 2 Pet. 1. 10. Often you must try your hearts, and your Actions by the Word of God, and beg his Spirit, and obey his motions, and excite your Graces, and watch against Sin, and deny your selves. The Trader endeavours all he can to get a plentiful Trade, and would have a great deal of business, and money flowing in upon him: The Merchant strives to have all the plentiful Returns imaginable: Oh! Let us strive that our Souls may not only be safe, but that they

they may prosper too : not only that we may pray, but pray with boldness to God, as Children to a Father : and when we are able to look upon him as so related, and as our Friend, our Service will be more fervent, and all our work done with greater life and heart ; our slavish fears and despondence will give way to Love and Hope ; and then every thing that concerns us, will undergo a most comfortable change : we shall be able to hear the Thunders, and the Curses, and the Threatnings of the Law, without astonishment and terror ; because we shall dwell as in God's Pavilion : We shall be able to think of Hell, and not be overwhelmed ; because we shall look upon it as a Dungeon, from which we are saved by the Grace of God : We shall attend to the Messages of the Gospel, for it will bring us glad tidings ; the blessed Angels will be your Guardians, the Ministers of the Church your Directors, and your Helpers ; the Malice of the Wicked, and the Rage of Devils will fall below us, and not reach our happiness.

8. *Take heed of concluding the special favour of God, from the Common Mercies you enjoy.*

1. *You must not conclude you have this Favour from any of your outward Privileges.* God may long dwell among a People by the outward Testimonies of his Presence, by his Word, and the means of Grace, and yet leave them at last. Who were once more happy than the Jews in his Protection, and yet none are more miserable than they are by his departure ? *Jerusalem,* where

where he had placed his Name, and that was once the glory of all Cities, is now no more remarkable for its glorious Temple, and its stately Towers; for its Riches, Grandeur and Splendor, wherewith it shined heretofore. The Holy Land, the Countrey of *Judea*, which our Saviour blest with his presence, which he instructed with his heavenly Sermons, and honoured with his Miracles, is now no more the same *Judea* that it once was: it is now groaning under the cruel Dominion of the *Turks*: and the Seven Churches have lost their Golden Candlesticks, and the blessed Guest that once walkt in the midst of them: The Stars that shone there, are now eclips'd, and their glory gone. It is a great mercy indeed to have the Gospel, but it will not in the issue be so to you, unless it shine into your hearts: If it do not prevail to the conversion of your Souls, it will aggravate your ruine: inasmuch as you will go from the clearest Light, to the thickest Darkness; from the brightest Day, to the most dismal Night. You cannot conclude that you have this Favour from any common gifts of knowledge, or of understanding, unless you be sanctified throughout. When our Lord ascended, *he gave gifts to men.*

* Like those Liberalities which Kings scatter indifferently among their Subjects in the day of their Coronation, without making a distinction between the good and bad; and of those pieces of Gold and Silver several partake that least deserve them; but their great Honours, and the Principal Offices of the Crown they reserve for their peculiar Favourites, and for those that be-
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* *Du Mou-
lin's Ser-
mons,
XI. De-
cade,
Serm. 2.*

long to the Household, and wait upon their Persons : so Christ distributes many Favours to all that enjoy his Gospel : but there are some that are peculiar to his own Family, as distinguished from the rest of men ; such are the gifts of Faith, of Regeneration and Adoption : Happy was the Womb that bare him, and happy were the Paps that gave him suck, and yet more happy are those that keep his Words ; *Luke 11. 27, 28.* Neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature, *Gal. 6. 15.*

2. You cannot conclude from your outward Prosperity, your Riches or abundance in the World, that you have this Favour of God, in which is Life. Our Lord, that by his own Example did intend to shew to men better things than the Goods of this World, did first cause his Angels to appear to the poor Shepherds, not to the Courts of Princes, and the Schools of Philosophers. He could have had Kings, if he had pleased, to wait upon him, and to lay their Crowns and Scepters at his feet ; but he chose a Train of poor Followers, whom he did enrich with Heavenly Treasures, and not with those of this Earth, though the whole Creation, and all its glories, were at his Command : The Poor were they that received the Gospel ; and not many Noble are called, &c. *1 Cor. 1. 27.* The poor of the world are rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom ; *Jam. 2. 5.* Tho as Riches are no sign of God's Election, neither is Poverty a mark of Grace : but yet with the Lower sort of People, and those that are not many times very wise for this World, God does often build his Church. Afflictions and

and Crosses are no mark of his displeasure; nor is a continued Prosperity the character of his Love: for many times God lets his Sun shine upon the Wicked to their dying day; their strength is firm; the Rod is not upon them; they fear no evil, they know no sorrow: there are no tears in their eyes, no sadness in their hearts, no complaining in their Families; See *Job 21.* from the 7th to the 13th verse. Riches are indeed of themselves great blessings; with them a man may do abundance of good works; which the poorer sort of People cannot, by reason of those straits and difficulties that they are to wrastle with: they are great Talents, and serviceable to great purposes; they do afford men great leisure for the affairs of their Souls; and not being perplexed with anxious cares how to get a livelihood, they may read and meditate, and pray with more devotion; but then these soft and easie Blessings meeting with the Corruptions that is in Humane Nature, they prove frequently to be a snare; they frequently minister to Pride, and Vanity, and Luxury, and Excess; to Sensualities and worldly Lusts; and for that reason it is that our Saviour says, *A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*, *Matt. 19. 23.* Few meet with Heaven here, and an Heaven hereafter; *Luke 16. 19, 20, 21.* The Rich man had all manner of Accommodations; a stately Dwelling, a throng of Admirers, soft Garments, and curious Entertainments, composed of every thing that could be fetch'd from the Land, the Sea, or the Air; and in the midst of all this
Plenty,

Plenty, had the Curse of an Uncharitable Spirit : the poor *Lazarus* was cloathed with Rags, whilst he ruffled in his Silks : the poor man, whilst he had his excesses, and his plenty, had not what was necessary to life. He was a modest Beggar, he asked but for the Crumbs that fell from his Table, the sweepings of his House, and yet he was denied. And to all this want there was added an increase of miseries by his painful Sores ; and the poor man had no Friends to visit him, no Physician to bind up his Wounds, no Cordial to support his Spirits ; in this sorrowful posture lay the poor *Lazarus* ; and his Carcass was even putrefying before he came to dye ; the Dogs were the only kind Creatures ; they lickt his Sores , and asswaged the vehemence of the pain with their healing Tongues ; ‘ They (as one expresses it) were Humane, ‘ though their Master was a Brute ; and yet this poor man was very happy : when his pains made him at length to dye, Angels were sent to convey his newly-delivered Soul away ; to carry him that was starved on Earth, to the Feast of Glory ; where he will never be in distress or trouble any more. The poor Man had a very weary Journey, but most sweet refreshment when he comes to his Journeys-end. He was exposed to the injuries of the VVeather, and the sharpness of the Cold ; but in *Abraham’s* Bosome he was inexpressibly comforted ; plenty enough had he in his Father’s House, though he could not obtain here, with all his begging, so much as one Crumb ; and the Rich-man, a little after, had his polluted and unready Soul
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torn away, and was condemned to greater destruction for having been so cruel to this poor man: This proud and scornful VVretch, whom with his flaming eyes he saw at rest whilst he was in his Torment, and who was become the beggar then, and fain would have had one drop to cool his burning Tongue, but it was denied; and he that shewed no mercy, found none; v. 23, 24. and his Hell was hotter to him, for having lived so much at ease here on Earth; and it increased his Flames to remember how many were hasting to the same place by his ill Example; and who, when they come thither, would encrease his torment. So that we may say to Rich men, what a good old Minister said to a Lord, after he had shewed him his stately House, his Gardens, his Fish-ponds, and his other Conveniences for a pleasant and easie Life; *My Lord (said he) you had need make sure of Heaven, for it will be bad going to Hell from such a place as this.* Many People think, that because their Endeavours succeed well, their Trades flourish, and their VVealth increases, that surely they are loved of God, and that these things are the marks of his peculiar Favour. You may live in pleasures, and yet be dead while you live. Your Bodies may want nothing, and yet your unregarded Souls suffer under miserable decays; you may be lifted up to Heaven with outward enjoyments, and yet they may only expose you to a greater fall, and a more amazing danger. You are healthful, it may be, while others are sick; but your health is not any other than a greater Talent which is given to you, and of which

which you must render a very strict Account : Your ways, it may be, are smooth, but do they not lead you to ruine, and the Grave? There is nothing more formidable than spiritual Judgments ; and of all spiritual Judgments, none so great, as for God to let you alone to chuse your own way, to take your own course, and to follow the devices of your own hearts : And it is a mark of his Anger kindled at a more than ordinary rate, when he says, *Hof. 4. 14. I will not punish their sons and daughters any more.* Rest not therefore in this, but seek for sanctifying Grace, and the pardon of your sins with your whole heart.

3. *Do not think, that because your Consciences are not under trouble, that for that very reason you have God's Favour.* The Ease that many Sinners have, is distempered, and will fade way ; 'tis like the Ease of an Apoplexy, that benumbs the sense, and weakens life ; 'tis like the slumbers of the sick that are caused with *Opiates*, and stupifying Positions : As many times true Believers fear, where there is no cause of fear ; so do Sinners hope where there is no cause of hope at all. Many a Saint weeps that is going to *Jerusalem*, because he sees not the blessed place that is before him ; and many a secure soul is asleep at the very door of Hell, because he does not perceive the danger that is underneath ; if he did, it would terrify him to see that the flood is coming, and his House is only built on the Sand ; to see that the Sword is drawn, and his Adversary is on the way, and he has not prepared to meet him. Some indeed have questioned, whether be the greater

greater Sin, Presumption, or Despair? It is no question but they are both very bad; they are both Rocks; and if a man be Shipwrackt, it is no great matter on what Rock he splits, when he is cast away. Though God will make allowances even for the despairing Expressions and Thoughts of his Servants in great and long desertions; he was gracious to *David*, though he despairingly said, *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul*. And to *Zion*, tho she said, *the Lord hath forgotten me. My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord*; Lam. 3. 18. But yet it is a sin that we ought to resist and strive against, and no less against Presumption, which slays its thousands every day. Oh how many are there! there are too many that eat and drink, and are merry, and yet know not whether God be their Friend, or their Enemy; *Psal. 55. 19. They feel no changes, and therefore they fear him not*. But if speedy, and serious, and hearty Repentance prevent not, they will shortly feel a change that will spoil and blast all their hopes; they'll feel a change that will at the same time conclude their Life, and send them to Judgment, and lodge their Souls in misery, and where will their hopes then be? My Friends, the way of Life is strait; there are abundance of mistakes about it; there are abundance of windings and turnings, of labyrinths and dangers, by the means of which you may be hindered in your Pilgrimage, if you do not take great care: there are several ways like to this way, that have a resemblance to it, and yet vastly differ from it: there is the Peace of God,

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and there is the Peace of *Satan*; it is the design of that malicious Spirit, to let you be quiet in your Sins, that you may not see their evil, nor feel their bitterness, and then you save him the labour to make you miserable, for you make your selves so. Suffer not him to blind your eyes, nor to lead you to destruction, whilst you never so much as make one halt, nor startle at it. You hear others complaining of their Sins, and crying out, that they are forsaken, and undone, and miserable, and you thank God you have no trouble, your Consciences are still and quiet. I beseech you take heed that it be founded upon good Reasons, that it prove not to be only a short slumber, and not a lasting peace. It may be you never doubted of God's love to you, and it is very well if you have no cause to doubt: You think, it may be, that such as are in Soul distresses, are so, because they have committed greater sins than other men; and that Vengeance therefore, like the *Viper* on *Paul's* Hand, fastens on them because they have been guilty of some very great and monstrous Sin: but you must know, the Judgments of God are too great a deep for you to fathom; he has wise Ends in those severe Dispensations, though those that are at ease may have committed as great Sins as those that are in trouble: many times a great Calm precedes an Earthquake; many times the Sky is very clear just before the Clouds gather, and the Lightning and Thunder comes. Beware, lest you be unsafe whilst you are most confident: Beware, lest you go down to the Grave, as thousands do,
with

with a foolish and ungrounded hope. Remember the foolish Virgins; and that of the Apostle, *1 Theff. 5. 3.*

C H A P. VI.

Shewing by what means we may know, whether we have God's Favour, or not. And first, by the graces of his Spirit, though the acting of them is neither so strong, nor so comfortable at one time as at another. And secondly, by our hatred of Sin; and our being satisfied with all his Providences.

THE next thing is to *Examine, and to try, whether you have indeed this Favour of God, in which is Life.* There are a great many people that think God to be their Friend, when he is their Enemy; and a great many troubled distressed Christians think that he is their Enemy, when he is their Friend. Let us, I beseech you, be very careful in a thing that so nearly concerns both our present, and our future peace: Let us take heed, that neither the Devil, nor our own hearts cheat us in a matter that is of so vast a consequence; and we have need of the greater care, because, if we should flatter our selves with a foolish hope, that we are God's Favourites, when we are not truly so; as our vain Expectations would leave us at the last, so

the Ruine that it would bring forth, would come with a double weight upon us ; for to fall from great hopes, is worse than never to have hoped at all : to be miserable after we have thought our selves happy, gives a more acute and bitter sting to that misery. There is many an one in Hell now groaning under the Eternal Wrath of God, that thought he should have seen the Smiles of his Face, and not have been terrified with his Frowns ; that thought he should have walkt in the Streets of the New *Jerusalem*, in liberty, and light, and peace ; whereas he is now in Chains of darkness, and in anguish inexpressible. With what tenderness, with what caution, and with what holy fear should we manage such an Affair as this ! with what solemnity ought I to proceed, when I am enquiring whether I am a Favourite of God, or not ; whether I belong to the Living, or yet remain among the Dead ; whether I am an Heir of Heaven, or an utter stranger to the blessed place, and the God that makes it to be so blessed as it is ? And there is not one person that reads this, but has cause to make such an Enquiry ; and to say with himself, I feel by the warmth and vigorous motion of my spirits, that I have a natural Life : I eat, and drink, and sleep, and take abundance of care, and use a thousand projects to maintain this same dear and pleasant Life ; but whilst my Body is indulged, and thrives, is not my poor slighted Soul in a state of death ? and whilst men shew me favour, and are friendly to me, have I the favour of that God that is to be my Judge, and
who

who is either the best Friend, or the worst Enemy? Now in this matter we may proceed by such Rules as these.

1. *Have you those graces of the Spirit wrought in you, which are the certain pledges and tokens of his Favour? Are you rich in faith, and yet poor in spirit? Are you hungry and thirsting after Righteousness? And when you find your own best Actions fall vastly short of the strict and pure demands of the Divine Law, do you prize and seek the Righteousness that is in Christ? Is that Sin now bitter to your taste, and grievous to your thoughts, which was once highly esteemed and prized? Do you hate and bewail that with a relenting spirit, that was once your dearly beloved, and your joy? Are you mortified to this World, and do you walk humbly, as wisely considering how weak you are, and how liable to be surprized, and to fall, always considering that you are very sinful, and very frail? These Graces of Faith, Mortification, Humility, and the like, are certain tokens of the Love of God; and in a Soul thus qualified, he delights to fix his Habitation; Isa. 57. 15. in such a Soul there is a Heaven begun: and it not only lives, but will attain new strength, and proceed to further degrees of life: though it now flourish in the Courts of the Lord, yet his Light shining upon it, will cause it to take the deeper root, and to look with a more amiable freshness: the Self-conceited shall miss abundance of refreshments that a Soul so lowly will meet withall; as those showers of*

Rain that slide away from the tops of Mountains, descend into the Valleys, and make them more fruitful; *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* He does not give this to remain for a small space only, but to remain with his Servants till their work be done: it is called the *earnest of our Inheritance*; Ephes. 1. 14. An Earnest, you know, is part of the Payment not to be returned again; and we are *said to be sealed with this Spirit unto the day of Redemption*: Eph. 4. 30. i. e. that is, as one explains it, God does by that distinguish Believers from other men, as Seals are employed to make a difference from other things that are not so much to be regarded; and as we seal our own Goods, or Papers, or some particular thing that is most precious; which Expression calls us to meditate on the infinite tenderness of God's Love to men. For a man does not love any thing so much as that which is his own; he looks upon other things, in which he has no propriety, with an indifferent and unconcerned eye, even the stately Glories of a Palace do not affect him with so great a joy, as the Little Conveniences of his own unobserved Cottage, because it is his own: And further, a Seal often carries the Arms of him whose Seal it is; or the Image of some great Person: so the work of the Spirit is to engrave in our hearts, Faith, Hope and Love; these are the Ensigns of the New Covenant; and form in us the Image of God, which consists in Righteousness, and Peace, and Holiness. God does not set this mark but upon those that are indeed his Favourites;

vourites ; that by the tenderness and softness of their hearts, are prepared to receive his Impressions. * But in this matter we are in a great measure passive ; as the Wax receives the same marks that the Seal stamps upon it : these are saving-works of the Spirit which I have mentioned ; whereas a great many common Gifts are bestowed upon those whom God abhors : many a man may have Light enough to shew others the way to Heaven, and yet never walk therein himself ; and he that was a Star in the Firmament of the Church on Earth, may sit in darkness ; 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. *Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal : And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.* You must under this Head observe these two things.

1. Not to expect to be alike strong in every Grace.

2. Not to have at all times the same Comforts.

1. *You must not expect to be a like strong in every Grace:* We ought to strive to be compleat, to have all the pieces of our Christian Armour polish'd, and fit for action, and well fitted and put upon us ; but those parts where is the most danger of a Wound, those parts where is the seat of Life, we are principally to secure and guard : So those Graces we are first of all to look after, and to cherish, which produce and

keep the rest in vigour ; such as Faith, and Repentance, and Humility. Tho' most certain it is, that all Men, even of those that are God's Favourites, are not of the same stature, nor the same strength, nor have they as much skill in every Duty, as it may be they have in one or two ; it is so ordered by the Holy Providence of God, that all in Christ shall have Tribulations, but very different many times from one another ; that so the different Grace that they are to exercise under their several Tryals, may shine with a brighter Glory. Thus of old, *Abraham* was peculiarly eminent for his *Faith*, *Moses* for his *Meekness* ; *Job* for his *Patience*. All Believers, by the Privileges with which they are invested, are Stars ; but yet even here one Star differs from another Star in Glory. As there are several gifts of the same Spirit, that are all useful to the whole ; so the Graces that are wrought by him, do, according to his Sovereign pleasure, produce several effects, according to the subjects in which they are ; and many times are very much advanced, or obstructed, by a good or ill temper of the body. Hence those that have a cholerick temper, the fieriness of their natural spirits, that upon every small occasion are apt to be enflamed, does very much hinder that meekness and calmness which is one of the Graces of the holy Spirit ; and so others that are naturally tenacious, and close, and narrow-soul'd, do many times smell too much even of these ill qualities, when they are converted ; but it ought not to be so ; for if there be any particular

ticular sin to which we are more enclined by our constitution than to another, we ought more industriously to set our selves against that sin.

2. You must not expect a continuance of the same comforts at all times; for the Spirit *blows where he listeth, and when he will*, Joh. 3. 8. Tho' the new Creature be formed in you by the Grace of God; yet you cannot perceive its motions with so distinct a sense at one time as at another; tho' by the intercession of Christ, his Favourites are secured from a total and final Apostacy, yet they may fall now and then, and their Life seem to decline, and a spiritual faintness come upon it, and a very deep sorrow may cover, and, as it were, bury your hopes and your joys; but yet there is that vital Principle that shall not see corruption; that seed of Grace that will now and then flourish with acceptable fruit. Your Faith may, in violent temptations, be like the weak and undiscernable stirring of the soul; when the body is in a Swoon, the soul does seem for a while to be departed; but after the spirits are refreshed, it animates the whole body, and exercises all the functions and offices of Life as it used to do. When the Ship was most violently tost with a Tempest, yet our Lord was there; tho' the poor trembling Disciples thought he did not care whether they were lost or saved. Thus Mary was drowned with Tears after his Resurrection; and not finding him where she expected, nor as soon, she gave way to sorrow: *They have taken away the Lord*, says she, *Joh. 20.*
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13. *and I know not where they have laid him;* when the very person that she had then in view, was the same dear Saviour and Friend that she long'd to see: And when with great tenderness and familiarity he discovered himself, and called her *Mary*, then she full well knew that it was her Master, and her poor drooping heart was filled with joy and transport, *She fell at his feet, and kissed them.* God does not equally manifest his favour, no, not even to the same person, who sometimes triumphs, and sometimes is very desolate; as the same vessel that is sometimes lifted up even as to Heaven it self, by the rising and the swelling Waves, is the next minute sinking to the bottom of the Sea, and ready to be swallowed in the formidable depths; tho' if we were duly prepared, the face of our God would appear with as amiable an aspect at one time as at another; for if any frowns be there, our sins are the cause; and because we are sinful, 'tis necessary for us now and then to weep, as well as always to rejoice. The Clouds, and the Showers are as needful to the Earth, as is the constant shine, and the fairer weather. Our Graces yield no delight to us, till the Spirit actuate and enliven them: till *he blow upon the garden*, Cant. 4. 16. *the spices do not flow forth;* nor do the sweetest of the flowers smell with such a perfume, and such a fragrant scent as they then do. If we would have a warm sense of the Love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts, it must be done by the efficacy and influence of the Holy-Ghost; he brings the most suitable Truths to

remembrance, and he seasonably applies those Promises that are most comfortable and reviving; he raises in us holy courage and hope, and he fills our Sails with his favourable blasts; he banishes that fear, and those perplexing doubts that enslave us, and sets before us the Mercy and the Loving-kindness of God; and pours into our smarting and bleeding Wounds, the Consolations of the Gospel. There are, indeed, some particular times when God is pleased to give to the soul the clear manifestations of his favour; and they are usually by Divines said, to be in such particular circumstances as these:

1. He is pleased to condescend to *New Converts*, that are suddenly cheered with mighty Joys, and filled with an admiration of his Grace; He considers the weakness of these tender Pilgrims, and his joy becomes their strength; he feeds them as with Angels food; for he knows they have a great way to go, and therefore he carries them in his Arms, and leads them gently along, and they meet not with those sharp and heavy Tryals that more experienced Christians meet withal. The sudden change that such perceive, when they go from gross darkness into a marvellous light, when their Chains are struck off, and their Prison-doors set open, makes them to wonder and adore. Hence it is that they have vigorous affections, and are very active for the Glory of their Saviour; hence it is that their Zeal is so fervent, and the flame of their Love burns so clear and bright.

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2. Another season when God Communicates to his Servants peculiar manifestations of his favour, is at *the Lord's Supper*; when they see their Redeemer Crucified before their eyes; when they see the torments of his Body, and the Agonies of his Soul, how pained, how amazed he was, and that all this pain was for them, and for their Salvation; and that as surely as they receive the Bread and the Wine, so surely do they receive this Jesus, and all his benefits: Direction for the present, and a title to everlasting Glory; this carries them up to the top of the Mount, this makes them to tast of the Tree of Life. This sight of a dying Saviour, and of the Heaven that he purchased, makes them to worship him with praise, and to think themselves even as already there where he is. To this Table of the Lord, the believing soul goes hungry and a thirst; and from the same Table returns greatly pleased with so Divine a Banquet, tho' not without the most earnest desires of that entertainment that is reserved for it above.

3. God is pleased to give his Servants a clearer manifestation of his Love, *when he intends to employ them in some remarkable or extraordinary service*; and as he encouraged *Joshua* that met with great difficulties, by saying, *Fear not, but be of good courage, I am with thee*, Josh. 1. 9. When he sets before them the Labours and Dangers of the Combat, he displays at the same time, the greatness of the Reward, and the glory of the Victory: Thus does he animate his Soldiers to fight his Battels; thus he prepares

pares his Martyrs to witness to his Truth, and with such a sense of his favour, no Cup seems too bitter for them to drink, no danger too great for them to Conquer. Hence *Moses* said, *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence, Exod. 33. 15.* But with that, he was content to go to what place of difficulty soever he was called; he would rather (as one says*) be in a * *Culver-* desolate and howling Wilderness, than in a *well's* pleasant and a fruitful Land without the pre-*WhiteStone,* sence of his God; he knew there was no *P. 125.* sweetness in *Canaan* without him; there is more Sting than Honey in the Land of Promise, unless he be there; and *Canaan* it self will prove a Wilderness, if he withdraw himself. Thus God, as the same person says, when he called *Abraham* to that great expression of obedience, in the sacrificing of his *Isaac*, he first warms his heart with his Love, and seals up the Covenant of Grace to him; he spreads before him ample and comprehensive Promises, *I am thy God al-* sufficient, *I am thy buckler, and thine exceeding great reward*; and this will bear up and support *Abraham*, though the staff of his old Age be taken away, and by his own hands cast into the Fire.

Or, 4. *In Prayer*; God is many times pleased to shew his favour to the Soul, giving it a secret assurance of his Mercy, saying, *I am thy God and portion*; and so sends it away filled with good things.

Or, 5. *In great straits*, and pinching wants; when there is least of the creature, there is usually most of the Al sufficient Creator; when all the

the Cisterns of Earthly Comforts are broken, then this Fountain overflows, and sends out his comfortable streams. He carries his people *into a Wilderness, and there he speaks comfortably to them*, Hof. 2. 14. And is then most kind, when the World will shew them no kindness.

Or, 6. after they have got the *victory over some Lusts and Corruptions* that were both dishonourable to him, and uneasie to them; such a Conquest is attended with his approbation, and that gives them a mighty joy, like the joy that the poor *Israelites* had, when they saw their Enemies drowned in the Red Sea.

Or, 7. *in the day of death*; When all the shine of Earthly delights is clouded, and their Sun is just upon his setting, they lift up their feeble and their longing eyes toward Heaven, and he draws away the Vail, and they see the Son of God standing at his Right hand, as their Advocate and Mediator; and then it is that a poor weary Soul says with *Paul*, *I desire to depart, and to be with Christ*. As *Mr. Flavel* says of old *Mr. Lyford*, that being desired, a little before his death, to let his Friends know in what condition his Soul was, and what his thoughts were about that Eternity to which he seemed very near; he answered, with a cheerfulness suitable to a Believer and a Minister, *I will let you know how it is with me*; and then stretching out an hand that was withered and consumed with Age and Sicknes, *Here is*, says he, *the Grave, the Wrath of God, and devouring Flames, the just punishment of Sin on the one side, and here am I a poor sinful soul on the other side*;
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but this is my comfort, the Covenant of Grace which is established on so many sure Promises, hath salved all. There is an Act of Oblivion passed in Heaven, I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. This is the blessed Privilege of all within the Covenant, among whom I am one. What a quiet and a blessed soul was this! How full of joy in a time of usual amazement and terror! With what strength was he furnish'd to fight with his last Enemy! God grant that you and I may have such strength, and such comfort when it shall be our time to dye.

2. *That you may know whether you have the Favour of God, in which is life, you must examine, whether you esteem him more than the world.* There are two Qualifications of this Esteem: 1. That it be serious and deliberate. 2. That it be prevalent. 1. That it be *serious*: It must be the product of many solemn repeated thoughts; a viewing of him as invested with many glorious Perfections, as he is represented in his Word, and as he shines in the face of Jesus Christ: a due considering both what he is in himself, and what he will be to you. This Esteem is not wrought by a hasty glance, or a passant view, but by deep thoughtfulness, attended with calm and sedate reflections on our own guiltiness, and his mercy; on our own emptiness and miseries, and his Alfsufficiency; and then a balancing of all things that pretend to a share in our Affections, and submitting at length to the juster claim of God: Saying after this, or the like manner: Lord, I yield up my self to Thee

Thee as Thine own. I was a little while dazled with the gay Pleasures of a vain World, but now I bid them all farewell, that I may come and taste thy Joys. I have served Sin and *Satan*, but they have cheated and deceived me; they have given me Vexation instead of Rest, and Husks instead of Bread; therefore now, O my Father in Heaven, poor Prodigal as I am, I return to Thee to live in Thy Family, to do Thy Work, and never to wander, or to be extravagant any more. Oh! give me not all my portion in this World, but let me have an Inheritance in that which is to come. Let others pursue their several projects, and obtain what they pursue; let them succeed in their Affairs, and bathe themselves in the softest pleasures; It is God that I seek, it is he that I will most value: 'Tis a sign that a beam of heavenly light hath shined upon your souls, if this be your frame. 2. Your esteem must be *prevalent*; the worst of Men have some esteem of God, as of a Glorious, a Powerful, a good and happy Being; and they think those the safest, and the most Honourable persons that enjoy his favour: but then there are a thousand trifles that they more esteem and labour after, as Riches, or Ease, or Gain, or Applause. But can you truly say, I would not, if I might, have all the World, without God himself? I had rather have him, tho in Poverty, and Disgrace, and trouble, than to be compass'd with throngs of flowing joys without his Love? If you have this Favour of God, you will easily look through all the painted Varnish of the World, and

and see its real vanity. God, and things Divine, will not only gain your hearts, but gain them in a Sovereign and a Powerful degree; and till we thus prize and value him, he is not our God, nor is his favour our portion: If you have this, you will say with *David*, *Psal. 4. 6.* *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.* It is not outward prosperity or grandeur, or the favour of Men, or the ease of the flesh, that I seek, but thy self: Thou art my Exaltation, my Joy, my every Good; all that I wish for, and all that I desire.

3. *If you have this favour of God, you will know it by the hatred that you have of sin.* Wherever this comes it will banish that, it will weaken and expel it; and tho it do not altogether destroy it, yet it will take away from it all its former amiableness and beauty; you will not sin with such boldness as you used to do; nay, you will be so far from that, that you will not dare to commit the least iniquity; and if there be fixed in your souls a real and abiding hatred of Sin, and if you use all good endeavours against it, it's a most certain mark that you are past from death to life; you cannot but remember what bitterness the remembrance of your former iniquities filled your souls withal; what consternation did then seize upon your poor spirits, when you thought God your Enemy, and Hell your Portion! What would you then have given for the least beam of that Sun that now shines with his gentle beams upon your heads! How welcome was the voice of that Messenger that brought you
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IRREGU PAGINA

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glad tidings, and that assured you there was Mercy and Hope even for you! Ere you obtained this favour of God, you have had many a restless night, and many a weary day in a solicitous enquiry, what would become of your immortal souls for ever.

4. *If you have this favour of God, in which is Life, you will be satisfied with all his dispensations that will bring you nearer to himself.* It is an observation not without its Truth, That *wherever God gives Grace, he will send afflictions to exercise that Grace*; and those that have the strongest Grace, must look for such conflicts, such temptations, and such assaults from the Devil in their way to Heaven, as will put all their Grace to the utmost and the largest stretch. None shall come to Heaven without suffering; none can tell how many Millions of sufferings he may endure before the day of Salvation dawns upon him; but he is a very happy person that is not overwhelmed with these innumerable calamities, That whilest he swims as in a Sea of grief, can lift up his head, and exercise his Faith, and say, *Lord, let thy will be done.* If thou wilt be with me in the fiery Furnace, and in the deep Waters, I shall not fear, tho those Flames be very hot, and these Waves roul fast one upon another. Tho it is our Duty to deprecate long, and severe, and heavy Tryals; it is a common thing in our Prayers, to say, *Lord, if thou wilt save me at last, bring any sort of affliction on me, I will refuse nothing.* But alas! alas! we generally do not know what we say; there are those Arrows in God's Quiver, which

which if they should be shot against us, would cut us to the very soul, and make us quickly to change our language. There is that unspeakable weight in his hand, when he lays it much upon us, that we cannot bear; There are those Pains at his disposal, and which our sins deserve; that are in all things, setting aside their duration, as the very pains of Hell. He is the good Man that does not desire affliction; for he will be sure to have it whether he do or not: but that can submit to it when it comes upon him; that does not make to himself a Cross, but takes it up when he finds it lying in the way; that can say, Lord, if I must be poor, in order to Eternal Riches, I am very well satisfied; if I must be very low, and contemptible, and despised, before I come to thee, that lowness, and that contempt, shall be my real glory. If, during all the days of my Pilgrimage, I must sow in Tears, I will go on however, for I know that I shall reap in joy. If my corruptible Body must languish away in pain, and my sinful Soul have its troubles too, I will wait in hope, and not repine or fret at thy Decree; If I must be friendless here, I will still prize thee, as my best and Eternal Friend; even when I am sorely oppressed, I will keep close to thee, I will lay hold on thy Perfections, on thy Covenant, and on thy Promises, and I will not let thee go till I be blessed. This Favour of God causes a person to rejoice in him, tho the Fig-tree do not blossom; and when any dear Comfort, any Relation is taken away by Death, will make him say, My God is

better to me than Ten of these Comforts, nay, than many Thousands of them put together: And tho he snatch from my Embraces what I most valued in this World, yet he shall have my best affections, my desire, my love, my delight as much as ever. A Soul thus prepared to be quiet under the severest dispensations, has Life in the Favour of God; he has that Life that shall never expire, but end in Eternal Life.

C H A P. VII.

Of several other ways whereby a sense of God's favour may be preserved in our souls; and how we may certainly know that we are in that Happy state.

V. **I**F you have this Favour of God, you will desire the continuance of it above all other things; and this will be both an evidence of your present sincerity, and a means to convey to you a more pleasant sense of this favour. In all outward actions, as Prayer, Hearing, Giving to the Poor, and the like, there may be a very great resemblance between a true Christian and an Hypocrite; but spiritual desires being the immediate off-spring of the soul, are not liable to so many cheats; and your desires after God will be very strong and earnest, and produce powerful and sensible effects, for they will be the
fruit

fruit of a lively Faith, and of an enlightned Understanding that sees the value of a God. And this will render more strong the motions of your Souls; for ignorance of him is the Mother of all feeble and languishing Desires. Your breathings after him will be like Hunger and Thirst, which are very uneasy to Nature, and give us the most raging and eager Appetites, and make us not well satisfied till they meet with their proper Gratifications. Psal. 42.

1, 2. *As the heart panteth after the water-brooks: so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before him?* Even as that poor Creature, when'tis pursued with Hunters, and greatly heated with its flight, longs to be refreshed with the cool Streams of Water, so will you, when harassed with the Temptations of the Devil, and his malicious and most cruel Suggestions, fly with haste to the Embraces and Arms of God, longing and panting after him; nay, the warmth of your desires may be so great, as that you will, even as it were, melt away in flaming Zeal. Psalm 84. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* And Psal. 119. 20. *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy commandments.* Hope deferred makes the heart sick, Prov. 13. 12. An eager desire of absent amiable Good, raises an agreeable Sensation, and somewhat of Disorder in the Natural Spirits; they are heated and stirred up with more vigour through the vehemence with which they move, tho this does very much

abate their strength, and occasion that which we call fainting. Such is the Sympathy that the Soul hath with its dearest Body, that when the Soul meets with an Object suitable, it is filled with warm Affections, and fills the Body either with sadder, or more chearful Spirits, as it finds reasons of Sadness or of Joy. Tho these desires of holy Men after God, do not always burn with an equal Flame; for in Desertions, in some very perplexing Difficulty, or in great bodily Indisposition and Sicknes, they are damped, and cannot usually be so quick, so chearful, and so sensible as at other times, tho even then they may be very sincere and acceptable; for in so gloomy a time, one Groan that comes from an humble heart may go up to God in as grateful a manner, as many long Prayers at another season. And in your desires after his Favour, you will have regard to these two things.

1. *You will remember what it was that once beightned your desires, and endeavour by the same means to quicken them when they begin to languish.* You will often consider what perfection in God it was, whether his Goodness, his Mercy, his Truth, his unchangeable Faithfulness, or the like; or what promise in the Scripture, or what Act of Providence towards you, it was that warmed your hearts. And apply your selves again to the same profitable methods; you will often recollect what passages they were in Sermons that you heard, or in the good Books that you read, that gave you the first amiable Sense of God.

2. *You*

2. *You will carefully observe what it is that cools and damps your desires.* What Passion, what worldly Pleasure, what vain Company, what foolish Hopes, what tormenting Cares, what enslaving Fears; and avoid all these as much as in you lies. You will avoid those Snares that intangled you, those Tentations that have clipt your Wings, and made you, when you were soaring aloft, to fall to this Earth again. Whatever secret Sin it was that weakned your holy Breathing after God, or what omission of Duty it was that estranged him from you, and immediately begin to mortifie that Sin, and to set upon that Duty; tho when we have done all we can, there will be a vast difference between what we are, and what we ought to be; between our longing, and the most Glorious Object after which we are to long. But do we find no more any pleasure in our old Lusts? Do we find our Hearts dead to this deceitful World, and to those Objects that once we called Amiable, and to which we sacrificed our time, our endeavours, our morning and our evening Thoughts? Do the things that heretofore we most admired, now seem less eligible? Does all that we called beautiful, seem deformed when compared with God himself? Can every one of us sincerely say to our most beloved Sins, and to the enjoyments of this World, I once indeed over-admired you, but I will never do so again for ever. I bid you all farwell, never pretend to a share in my Affections, for I have now found a better good, I have long pursued you to no purpose; now in finding God, I have found a

sure, a smooth, and a near way to rest: you have cheated me with vain Delusions too oft, but you shall cheat me no more; for it is to God that I offer up my heart, tho with grief that I loved him no sooner, when he is so infinitely good and amiable.

VI. *If you have this favour of God to be Life to you at present, then you have felt by experience, what a miserable thing it is to be without him.* Tho as there is a wonderful variety in the Works of God in Nature, so there is no less in those of Grace. His Favour is not communicated in all respects the same way; tho all are redeemed by the Blood of the same Redeemer, yet some shall groan under the painful Sense of their Chains and Captivity much longer than others. In some, the New Birth is produced by his gentle Hand in a little time, and others have it not till after many dreadful Pangs and Agonies. Some get to Heaven with much fewer Conflicts than others do, that are travelling to the same place. This Variety is admirable and very wise, tho we discern not the reasons of it. But yet all that are blessed with the Favour of God, cannot without astonishment survey the hideous Darkness, and the woful Danger in which they lay before this glorious Sun was pleased to shine. Oh! what would have become of me for ever, saith such an one, if he had suffered me to follow my own Choice, and to take my own Course, and to have my own Desires, when I was running even to the Gates of Hell. I now indeed see my sad estate as it then was; but,
oh!

oh! what would have become of me, had he suffered me to continue in my fatal Slumbers on the edge of Ruin? If I had dreamed on, and had not awaked before the dreadful blow of Death, where would then my lot have been? How many thousand Miseries was I under, and did not perceive my Bondage, nor feel my Misery? Death was creeping on me, Hell was gaping to receive me, the Law curst me, the Devil led me Captive, and I knew it not, and in this woful posture did he find me; I was polluted, and cast out, and helpless, and in my Blood, and then *he said unto me, Live, Ezek. 16.* and made the time of my Danger, and my Provocation, to be a time of Love. So great a Change, and so happy a Revolution deserves indeed a frequent and thankful Remembrance. It does give a mighty pleasure to the Soul to find it self safe, when it was even in the Jaws of the roaring Lyon ready to be torn in pieces, when the Arm of the Almighty rescued the endangered, and the trembling Prey. It is not with a greater pleasure that a sick Man, who has been long confined with inexpressible Pain, and at the very door of the Grave, thinks of his present Health and Life. A Mariner that hath escaped Shipwrack, the Dangers of the Sea, and upon a Plank, or broken piece of the Ship, with great hardship and difficulty is got to Land, does not with a greater Calmness look upon the Waves, and that Sea that had like to have swallowed him up, then such a Sinner looks upon his former Miseries, and his present Priviledge; his former Enmity
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to God, and his present Reconciliation with him.

2. *It may be you have experienced, that nothing in all the World is so very terrible as his withdrawing from you.* Have you not found it to be a Punishment much greater than bodily Pain, or Sickness, or any Temporal Calamity? That the loss of your dearest Friend, your kindest and most comfortable Relation, was much more tolerable than such a loss as this: to lose the sense of his Favour after you once enjoyed it, has not this loss been to you, even as Hell it self; or like the departure of *Adam* out of Paradise, after he had once beheld the Beauties, and tasted the Pleasure of that amiable Place? What Fear, what Anxiety, and what Consternation did seize upon him, when he was to be kept from it, never more to see the Tree of Life, never more to walk in that most delightful Garden, nor to see Angels visiting his sweet Habitation, as they once used to do? And have you not been possessed with as great a fear, when you have thought that God for your Iniquities was turned your Enemy! I could bear any other Affliction, says the *poor deserted Soul*; but to be forsaken of God, is so terrible, that I cannot bear it. How can I see Frowns in his Face, and live? I have had many Disappointments, and Vexations, and Crosses, and in all these I could lift up my Head, and hope; but now I am destroyed on every side, and my hope is gone. Heretofore, when the World had used me ill, I could go to the Throne of Grace, and my heavenly Father would give my weary Soul pleasant entertainment, and speak comfortably

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to me; but now he does not visit and refresh me as he used to do; and his blessed Face that I once saw with peace, is now hid and covered with a Cloud. I have my former worldly Comforts, my Friends; and my Estate; but alas, my God is gone, and what do these avail! I once read his Word with Joy, and now it fills me with Gall and Wormwood. I once sat under his Shadow with great delight, and his Fruit was pleasant to my taste; but now I am athirst, and have nothing wherewith to quench my thirst. I am now scorcht with heat, and have no Shelter, no cool shady Retirement where I may fly for ease. Job 23. 8, 9. *Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he doth hide himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.* You will most earnestly pray against so sad a state as this is, if you have ever experienced the Favour of God to be your Life. Oh Lord! hide not thyself from my poor Soul; whatever else I loose, let me not lose thee and thy Love. Do not hold me for thine Enemy, nor let thy Terrors fall upon me; do not cast me off, O my Father, tho I have been very disobedient. And if God depart, your mourning for his absence will be like the mourning of a Mother for the death of an only Son, or like the sadness of so many poor Children that bewail a lost Father; they are left destitute, and can do nothing without his advice and help. You will follow your God with Tears and Supplications, and say with Christ in great agony, but with great Faith

Faith, My God, my God, *why hast thou forsaken me!* Why dost thou forget the Work of thine own hands? *Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak;* why dost thou leave me in this doleful Wilderness where no Water is, to be a prey to Satan and mine own Fears? I have indeed wandered about, seeking rest, and find none; put out thy loving hand, and guide me to thy self. I have indeed deserv'd this usage, for thou wast with me, and I did not value thy presence; thou didst call, but I did not obey thy voice; thou didst stand at my Door, but I shut thee out; wo, wo unto me that I have sinned; wo unto me, that I did not improve thy Grace, thy Presence, and thy Love, as I should have done. But tho I have been a Prodigal, thou art a Father still; and tho I have not done as becomes a Child, yet I will return to thee, because thou wilt not cast off the comfortable Name of a Father. Thus, I say, do those that have had experience of God's favour mourn for his absence? Their Spirits are like the tender Flowers that hang their heads when the Sun is set, and they walk more disconsolately than any Subject can be supposed to do: who after having once shared in the peculiar Graces of his Prince, sees him at length, because of his Crimes, to look upon him with a severe, or a less favourable eye,

VII. *If you enjoy the Favour of God, you will have a great value for his Word, for the Spirit, and the Blood of Christ:* For his Word, as discovering to you this God; and persuading you by many comfortable

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comfortable Promises and Entreaties to accept of him ; and not only so, but conveying to you saving light and knowledge, with its great and powerful efficacy. You will love the Word, because of the many Supports and Consolations which you have received from it ; you will love it as the Rule of your Duty, and all its Precepts will be dear to you, as conveying to you life and strength : you will love it so, as to read it often, so as to meditate upon it, and to lay it up in your hearts : you will love it as the Instrument of your Regeneration ; and rejoice in it not only for a season, but for ever. You will value and obey the Spirit that sets home revealed truths upon your hearts ; and when you were destitute of this life, convinced you of your miserable state, and restored vigor and motion to those Faculties of yours that were stupified and benumbed ; chasing away their ancient darkness, and guiding them to their proper Objects ; and causing those Objects so discovered, to produce glorious effects in your once barren Souls. You will also prize all the Ordinances of God, in which you may have communion with him ; as Prayer, Hearing, Meditation, and the like ; and it will leave a sensible grief upon your minds, when you miss of these Ordinances by your own fault.

VIII. *You will be very humble and heavenly minded.* His Favour fills all his Servants with the lowest, and most self-abasing thoughts ; you will never speak of him, but in terms full of respect ; never pray to him, but with great reverence

rence and veneration: the nearer access you have to him, the more will you discern of his Infinite Holiness and Purity, and how vile you are when compared with him: you will wonder at his Condescensions; and cast down your Crowns before the Throne; and imitate his humble Language in 2 Sam. 9. 7, 8. when David told Mephibosheth, *Thou shalt eat bread at my Table continually; he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am!* This will cause you to admire the distinguishing Grace of God that is vouchsafed to you, more than to many others in the World; great numbers whereof are buried in Ignorance, or open Idolatry, and the rest in Profaneness or Hypocrisy; many, it may be, are passed by in the same Families where you live; and whilst you are alive, your next Neighbour, perhaps, is dead: And then, if you have obtained this Favour, you will be heavenly minded; your Treasure, and your Hearts, will be above; you will taste and relish spiritual and divine things; and never be more pleased, than when you are least earthly and carnal: and this holy temper will be your comfort and security against the Temptations of Satan, and the Evils of this lower World, as those Birds that soar aloft are out of the danger of Guns, and the Snare of the Fowler, who catches those that fly nearer to the ground.

IX. *You may then know that you have the Favour of God, if you are industrious and zealous in the performance of all holy Duties: If you perform them*
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not only from the force of awakening convictions, but from love and delight ; if you refuse no service that may glorify him, though it seem to thwart your worldly Interest, and to be painful to the Flesh ; and it is impossible but to find a very calm and chearful progress in your obedience, when you know that God accepts what you do. As it is a mighty encouragement to the labour of a Servant, when he sees that his Master is very well pleased with his work : Darkness, you know, with its many Inconveniences, does greatly put a stop to diligence, which yet is quickned and excited by the return of Light. So if God's Countenance shine upon you, it will make you not only to walk uprightly, but even to run the way of his Commandments with enlarged hearts ; *Psal.* 119. and you will associate with such as are serious, holy Persons ; for the living do not use to take pleasure in being among the dead.

X. And Lastly, *If this Favour of God be your Life, it will make you patiently to long for Heaven.* This Favour will be sweeter to your taste than honey, or the honey-comb : it will yield a more delightful relish to your renewed Appetite, than all the Joys of this World : the little drops that now and then refresh your hearts, will cause you to pant for those Rivers of Pleasures that are at his Right-hand for evermore. Are you weary of sinning ? weary of your imperfect Faith, and Hope, and Love ? Does the prospect that you have of God at this distance, render him so amiable to your Souls, that you would fain be
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with him where he is? Are you so sensible of the evil of your Sin, that you would fain be in that place where you shall sin no more for ever? where your panting Soul shall have all its longings turned into an eternal Complacence and Delight? You will often lift up to Heaven your longing eyes, and send thither many a fervent wish; saying with *David*, *Oh! when shall I come and appear before God!* Psal. 42. 2. When will it be that I shall see his glorious Face, and feel beyond all doubt that I am loved of him, and that I love him better than I now do! where the joys of hope shall be turned into fruition, and when that which I have now but in the promise, I shall have in the sweetest and most comfortable possession! When shall I be near his Throne, and see that glorious Majesty that I have adored! When shall I see that Face, all serene, and have no black or mournful Cloud to interpose between my God and me for ever! Oh that I might join in the Hallelujahs of the Blessed! Oh that I were in that Land of eternal Light and Joy, and in that agreeable Society of Holy Souls, who have already shot the gulph, and rest from all their labours, for I am weary with beholding Vanity. These, and such like, will be the motions of an holy Soul; for its warfare with Sin, the World, and the Devil, is so painful, that it cannot but desire to be releas'd. Its Ignorance is so great, that it cannot but long to be overspread with pure and eternal Light. *The Captive*

Isa. 51. 14. *exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail;*
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But then this longing must be attended with patience; for we may sin even in desiring Heaven, when we desire it with too much precipitancy and haste; and in this, good men are many times very much to blame; many times when a Person meets with some heavy sickness, or some very troublesome affliction, he is apt to say, Oh that God would now take me to Heaven! there is a great deal of self-love in this; and our Nature, when it finds it self oppressed, would fain be at ease; but we must not forget, that we must bear the Cross, and suffer, before it will be our time to reign. We must hold on in our Race, though the Weather be foul and stormy: many thousand pains may be our Lot, ere God will call us hence; and the first thing that we are to desire, is, that we may have faith, and submission wherewith to bear those Pains, and to persevere till he be pleased to call us. Some indeed he is pleased to dismiss from this Earth to his Heaven, as on the sudden; but if you consider, you will find the greatest part of his Servants have long troubles, manifold Agonies, tedious Conflicts, and heavy Pains, before they come to that Glory; and in this respect, they find the Gate that leads to Life to be very strait and narrow. The Land of Promise is indeed a pleasant Land; it flows with Milk and Honey; but there are many Gyants to conquer in our way thither: your desires of Heaven cannot be truly regular, unless you be content to glorify him by suffering, as well as by the doing of his Will. And even with patience there may be an earnest and affectionate

ardent desire to be with God ; and thus some of the Saints have breathed out their Prayers ; Oh time! run fast, and remove days and hours out of the way, that I may enjoy, for ever enjoy the beloved of my Soul ! Farewel all ye my Friends and Relations, for I am going to better Friends : Farewel all my temporal Possessions, for I am now going to be possessed of an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fades not away : Farewel eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and all my pleasures and recreations ; for I am now going to the Supper of the Lamb, and shall not need these weak supports of frail Nature any more. And others have cried out, Oh, my God ! let me not still be in darkness, and provoke thee, and hazard my Salvation, and please the Devil, and add sin to sin ! Oh why is my desire still unsatisfied ! When shall I have nothing more to wish for ! when will it once be, that I shall be delivered ! Oh, come Lord, lest I be weary of my work and duty ; lest my Graces be like poor tired Soldiers, that fall into confusions, and so lose the day. Happy is the man that loves thee above all ; happy is the man whose hope and trust is in Thee ; but most happy is he that is with Thee, where I also long to be.

Thus I have finished the Application. And I hope there are several of my Readers, whose Consciences, after such a tryal, do salute them with happy tidings, and say, You are those that have God's Favour. And oh what happy People are all such ! happy shall they be in life, happy in their death, and happy for evermore.

Some

Some will say, Happy are the men that are rich and great, that have thriving Trades, numerous Attendants, and swelling Titles; that have plenty of Gold and Silver; that need take no care how to live, and are freed from all the pinching anxieties of a poor and a low Estate; *Psal. 144. 15.* It may be said to every such person in the Language of the Angel Gabriel to the blessed Virgin; *Hail thou that art highly favoured! the Lord is with thee, Luke 1. 28.* and in *v. 30. Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God.* And what indeed can they fear, whose Friend he is, that is so good, and so powerful!

C H A P. VIII.

Of the several Privileges that belong to those who have God's Favour.

Conf. 1. **W**hen you have this Favour, all your sins are pardoned: Your God will not remember your Iniquities any more: All the Vanities of your Childhood and Youth, all your Omissions and your Commissions shall not rise against you to condemn you: Tho you have often quenched the Holy Spirit, and stifled his Convictions; yet all this, and many thousands of other sins that made you dead in Law, shall be blotted out; all your sins of Ignorance, and all those that have been done against Light, and Love, and Knowledge, shall all be covered by this Grace of God.

2. *All your Prayers shall be heard.* Being pardoned, and your guilt removed, you will have *access with boldness unto God*; who will give you either the very things you desire, or those that are better, of another kind: Your Persons are acceptable, and so will all your Duties be, and therefore successful, because Christ is your Intercessor: who, as he hath once purchased Life for you with his Blood, will apply it to you for your further purification; *Heb. 9. 11, 14.* Nay, you will not only prevail for mercies for your selves, but being Favourites in the Court of Heaven, you will be in a capacity to obtain many blessings for others too: *Matt. 18. 19.* *If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* God, as one says, sometimes stands upon a number of Voices, for the carrying of some publick Mercy, because he delighteth in the harmony of many praying Souls; and also loves to oblige and gratify many in the answer and return of the same Prayer. And therefore it is our duty to beg the prayers of those that we think good People, because of their interest in God. Many seek the Rulers favour, *Prov. 29. 26.* their wants, and their ambition push them forward, and make them very complaisant and respectful to such, in whose power it is to do them considerable kindnesses; and they make a peculiar address to such as are principal Favourites; and it is reckoned as a main step to Promotion, to have a Friend in Court; it is to our great advantage to be remembered in the Prayers of those that share in God's Favour.

3. *When*

3. *When you are the Favourites of God, he will accept your sincere services, though they be mingled with many failings.* The meanest Oblations that you lay upon his Altar, shall be grateful; while the more pompous and costly Sacrifices of others shall be disesteemed: your inward groans shall move his tender heart sooner than their howlings and their loudest cries. *Prov. 15. 8.* He will cherish your feeblest breathings after him, and add more strength to the bruised Reed, and more flame to the smoking Flax: He will register your good Actions, and not upbraid you with your evil ones. There was *some good thing in Abijah toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam, 1 Kings 14. 12.* and he took peculiar notice of it: and at the last day Our Lord mentions the Charities, and the Bounties of his People, which they themselves had forgot long ago. He will not reject your Faith, though there be many doubts mingled with it; nor cast off your desires, though they have a great deal of deadness, and want many further degrees of life and fervour: He will remember his Covenant, tho' you forget your Duty: *Mal. 3. 17. I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

4. *God will either preserve you from outward dangers, or give you strength to bear them:* He will be afflicted in all your afflictions, and tenderly regard you as the Apple of his Eye. What can you fear, whilst you have so great a Defender! what may you not hope for, when you have so good a Benefactor! as he said to Abraham, *Gen. 14. 2. Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great*

reward : A Reward to quicken your service, and a Shield to keep you from hurt in the day of battel. Or as in *Dan. 10. 19.* *O man, greatly beloved ! fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.* What safety must he needs have, that had the Almighty for his Helper ! what honour must he have, whom an Angel called greatly beloved !

5. *He will keep you in his favour, that you shall not finally be cast away.* Though you be saved as by fire, and by great difficulty, yet you shall surely be saved. He may suspend his Influences, but he will not change his Covenants ; he may be angry, but he will not be so for ever : You may fall, and bruise your selves, but his gentle hand will heal your wounds ; *Rom. 8. ult.* He that loved you when you were Prodigals, will not shut you out when you return home again ; He that pitied you in your blood, will not reject you when his Image is upon you, though sullied with manifold defects : Your Life is hid with him in Christ ; and though by various tentations and troubles it is weakned, yet it shall spring forth again. Christ is the Vine, whereof you are the Branches : though your Life is exposed to many storms, yet in him 'tis very safe ; and you shall not expire by a total death, because Christ himself will never die : the Faithfulness of God, and the Life of Christ, are both unchangeable Supports to you : you need not fear the rage of your Enemies, while your Saviour is your Guide ; for he will bring forth Judgment unto Victory.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, God will be your God ; his Wisdom and his Power will direct and save you. Could I tell the Tradesman that is setting up, that I could help him to a plentiful Trade ; could I assure the Merchant of the successful arrival of his Ships ; could I tell the Poor how to be rich ; and the Rich how to get all that they wish for ; I should be a very acceptable Messenger : but to you that have the Favour of God, here are better tidings ! the Lord of Heaven and Earth is yours ; and then if you can tell the Stars, or the Sand of the Sea, or the drops of Rain, you may be able to number the Benefits that will accrue to you by such a Privilege : whatsoever is truly useful to your spiritual welfare, whatever in all the large Dominions of God, will do you good, you shall be sure to receive ; God the Father will be your Reconciled Father ; God the Son your Mediator ; God the Holy Ghost your Sanctifier ; You shall in no distress want an Alfsufficient and Almighty Friend ; you shall have all your holy Prayers heard and granted ; Life and Death shall be yours ; the Mercy of God will relieve you when you are in misery ; 2 Cor. 6. 18. *I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*: And he will say, as in Jer. 32. 41. *I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart, and my whole soul*. To be a Child of a King, sounds great, and carries with it an high degree of honour ; but to be the Children of the King of kings, is infinitely more honourable ; to have so great a Father, is an unspeakable, and a mighty Privilege : All the Dignities

nities that Ambitious Courtiers seek with all their Cringing Arts, are but little Trifles, when compared with this : all the Renown that Soldiers purchase with their sweat and blood, is but disgrace, when compared with the glory of being a Son or Daughter of the most High God. If the Queen of *Sheba*, when she beheld *Solomon*, that in the splendor of his Court, and the wisdom of his Actions, exceeded all the Report that she had heard before, cried out with wonder, *1 King. 10. 8. Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that bear thy wisdom !* How much more may we say, Happy are the Servants of the Living God; that serve him day and night, that wait at his Temple, and that sing his Praises; that see with what wisdom he manages all the great Affairs of his vast and large Kingdom; and that the same eye that is in the Wheels, does watch for them, and all is carried on with a peculiar respect to his Glory, and to their Salvation : the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is their Father, the Angels are their Guard, the Spirit is their Teacher, Afflictions are their Physick; *1 Cor. 3. 21. All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas; the stars that are in the right hand of Christ shine to give them light. The World is theirs, so much of it as is necessary to promote their real welfare. Life is theirs, wherein to prepare for happiness; and Death is theirs, to convey them to it. They are Christ's, his Brethren, and his Subjects; and Christ is God's, who is delighted with his Son, and with them in him. This is the privilege of a Favourite of God.*

God. He is now, it may be, poor and low, affronted and disgraced ; but the day draws near, when the same person that is disesteem'd by the Sons of Pride, shall be owned of his Great Lord : clothed with Garments of Praise, and led out in triumph, and applauding-Angels say to the grief of the Wicked, *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King of heaven delights to honour.* Thus you have set before you that which is Life indeed ; a Life that shall never close with Death : keep your mind full of these pleasant Ideas, endeavour to get a greatness of soul, that may not cease aspiring after these glorious Privileges ; and look with contempt upon all other Grandeur and Magnificence. Having seen how honourable it is to be favoured by the Lord of Hosts ; Let us all resolve, that we will never admire this vain World any more ; for we have now discerned a better World.

The End of the Second Part.

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning
TROUBLE of MIND,
AND THE
DISEASE of MELANCHOLY.

· P A R T III.

P S A L. XXX. 5.

*Weeping may endure for a night ; but
joy cometh in the morning.*

C H A P. I.

*Of the many miseries of this mortal Life,
that are the usual occasions of sorrow to
the Sons of Men ; with respect both to
their bodies and souls.*

I. **T**HE Life of Man is full of sorrow ;
which yet is not so to be under-
stood, as that it is in every part
full of darkness and calamity :
We have, indeed, stormy days, but then we
have fair weather too ; we have not only the
sharpness of the Winter that pierces us with its
Cold

Cold, and Frosts, and Snow ; but we have the mild and the favourable Summer afterwards, that causes all the whole frame of Nature to rejoice, and brings to us many grateful pleasant things, that gives us occasion to praise the Wisdom of our Maker, that has made a World so beautiful wherein we are to dwell ; That has provided for us all innumerable Comforts, not only such as are absolutely necessary to maintain our Life ; but such as may give us delight, and recreate our sense. We can no way turn our Eyes, but they behold wonders of his goodness, his Sun, his Moon, and his Stars, whose influences are for our benefit, as well as for his Glory ; give us daily cause to say with *David, Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him !* He does not willingly grieve the Children of Men, he does not make us always to weep, but affords us frequent occasions of rejoicing ; whereas all our time might be as one Rainy day, from the rising of our Sun to its going down ; but his Providence does permit us however to be laden with many Miseries before we come to another World : And let us take a view of them ; for it will be useful to subdue our Pride, to keep us from Vain-glory, to make us to remember that we are not at Home, that here is not our Rest, and that we ought earnestly to desire a better State.

I. *Let us consider Man in his first arrival in the World, or in his Infant-state :* And there we discern this same Creature, that in his after years makes so great a noise and bustle in the
World,

VWorld, to be a poor helpless thing, that is no way able to cherish the newly begun Life, nor to keep the Candle that is lighted, from expiring the same minute wherein it began to shine. Man comes crying into the VWorld; an action very suitable to him, at the entrance into a VWorld whose pleasures are floating and transient, but whose griefs are very sure. Other Creatures are endued with instincts and inclinations for their own preservation, and know in some measure, as soon as they begin to live, how to maintain their own Life; but Man of all others is most destitute and helpless in this respect, he is so tender and so frail, that the least cold or dangers do more easily affect him. Tho God has put that great love into Parents, that they do, as well as they can, support and comfort and help their Children, and with his blessing, and their own great care and labour, they make a shift to rear these little Plants. But then there are abundance of diseases that begin to set upon the new-born Creatures, Convulsions and other pains which greatly torment and vex them; but which they are not able to express, and which we do not know: But we are sure they begin betimes to weep and to be sorrowful, and their pains and sorrows make their Parents also to be afflicted and to weep with them, when they see their miseries, indeed, but cannot help them. This soft and tender Age is easily troubled and disquieted, every little thing troubles and molests them; so that the first hour of the night, in which we travel when we begin to live, is an hour of sorrow.

2. *When we are got over the weakness of our Infant-state, and begin to have more strength, and Reason dawns a little, and yields us a little light to guide our selves, That Light is mingled with darkness; our small skill hath abundance of imprudence, and we run into a thousand dangers that we do not see, and those dangers make us to weep and to be sorrowful; our careless youth is full of miseries, and the blooming Rose has many Thorns about it. When our Reason begins to display it self with our increasing-years, then the several tasks that are set us, the several things we are obliged to learn in order to a good and well-improved Education, bring forth grief and pain; our unwillingness to Labour, and the Corrections that we meet with if we do it not, do both afflict us; our Ignorance is our misery, and the difficulties that are planted about the Tree of Knowledg, do fright and vex us. Many of our early days are spent in digging for this hidden treasure, and which we cannot find, but with a vast toil and sweating for it; and which when we have found, does not satisfy. It's true, indeed, our first youth has to sweeten it, many pleasures, many recreations and diversions, and we are then void of the many Cares of Life that afterwards do pierce our hearts; but even then we are so confident and so foolish, so apt to trust our own understandings, and so backward to receive the advice of others who are more experienced, that we do often wound our selves, and sow those seeds of sorrow that yield us an uncomfortable Harvett many years after-*

afterwards : And when in our freer time we come to reflect upon what we have done, that reflection makes us weep, to think that we have done so little for God, or for our own Souls ; and that we lost so great a part of our Age in Trifles and Vanities : For we can then say, by sad experience, *Childhood and youth are vanity*, Eccles. 11. 10. The Joys that we then were pleased with, are past and gone ; but the Wounds that we then received, do many times smart and bleed afresh.

3. *When we have got the yolk of our Masters and Instructors off our necks*, and begin to manage and guide our selves and our Actions, then we have many sorrows still.

And that 1. *With reference to the Common Affairs of Life.*

2. *With respect to knowledg and understanding.*

1. *With reference to the Common Affairs of Life:* They are usually very many ; they bring along with them a huge Train of Cares, of grave anxieties and sollicitude ; if Men have no employment or business, they grieve for the want of it ; and if they be employed, they are hurried, and disturb'd, and grieved and vexed ; they meet with many people that are false and treacherous, with many businesses that are intricate and perplexed ; and thus their plodding Heads are stung with Cares, and their Breasts with sorrow, all groaning under the Curse, and proving the punishment to be true, That in the sweat of his Brows Man must eat his Bread, Gen. 3. Eccles. 2. 23. *All his days are sor-*

sorrows, and his travel, grief: yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. All his drudgery and his toyl is to small purpose, it is, indeed, vanity, when a Man deprives himself of *sleep, the sweet repose of Nature*, and next to the Grace of God, the greatest blessing in the World. The Poor are almost every where shedding Tears of Impatience and Discontent for the straitness of their Circumstances; they are mourning because they are like to want what would bear their Charges to the Grave; and the Rich are troubled how to secure the Riches they enjoy, and fear to lose them, as many have done before; for they cannot live long, but they shall see many whom a few days, and some unforeseen Accidents have brought from the greatest heights to the lowest poverty; whom the Rising-Sun found rejoicing, and whom he left, for their sudden miseries, plunged in Tears. How many Foreheads do you see covered with a Cloud of grief, for their Losses and their Disappointments! Look into the Country-fields, there you see toyling at the Plow and Sythe; * Look into the Waters, there you see tugging at Oars and Cables; Look into the City, there you see a throng of Cares, and hear sorrowful complaints of bad times, and the decay of Trade; Look into Studies, and there you see paleness and infirmities, and fixed Eyes; Look unto the Court, and there are defeated Hopes, Envyings, Underminings, and tedious attendance; all things are full of Labour, and Labour is full of Sorrow; and these two are inseparably joyned with the miserable Life of Man.

* Bp. Hall,
Vol. 1.
P. 451.

3. In the next place, consider *the miseries of the Body of Man*, that make him to weep and mourn : Persons of weak constitutions are liable to tedious and languishing pains that afflict them for many months together ; and those that are of a stronger temper, to such that are so sharp and so violent, that they dispatch them it may be in a week or two. Man is seldom without pain, and always near to sickness, to sickness that will make him groan and sigh whether he will or not ; and some sickness which is *all sorrow throughout*, such as *Melancholly*, which is all sad, and has not one bright or clear side, all disconsolate and grievous, stagnating the Blood, changing the brisk and chearful motion of the Spirits, and fixing the Mind unavoidably upon amazing and dreadful objects. So is that of *Job* verified, *His flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn*, *Job* 14. last. The several Seasons of the year have their inconveniencies, which annoy poor mortal men ; not only the Winter-quarter (as one expresses it) is full of storms, and cold, and darkness ; but the beauteous Spring hath Storms and sharp Frosts ; the fruitful teeming Summer is melted with heat, and choaked with dust ; and the Autumn is full of sickness. And how can the Eyes but shed innumerable Tears, when they consider the doleful pains to which they themselves, and all the other parts of the body are exposed ! How can the Man but groan, to find himself present in such a Body, from which he cannot for many painful years be dislodged, and in which he has no delight

or ease! What grief is it to him to have no help or relief, when his spirits are broken, and his heart is overwhelmed? To have many cutting afflictions upon him, and the fear of more to come! Eccles. 8. 6, 7. *To every purpose there is time and judgment: and therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?* To be daily dying in anguish and vexation, and not to be able to die! To be surrounded with Troops of Diseases; of Agues, Fevers, Consumptions, Cholick, Gout, Stone, and not to be able to keep any of these off, nor to run away from them when they come!

4. Add to all these natural sorrows, such as are distributed by God in Judgment: Such are the Tyrants that God suffers long to Flourish and to Triumph in the World, that tread upon the necks of others to advance themselves; and glut themselves with the Blood of the Innocent; daring to do what is most unjust, to gratify their Lawless Ambition, and their Lustful desire of Empire; and from them and their arbitrary designs, flow innumerable injuries, and wrongs, and robberies, and mischief, Eccl. 4. 1. Then the other Judgments; Plagues and Famine, spreading Contagions, or Bloody Wars; Plagues that at the same time seize and kill; that Conquer wherever they come, and send Thousands of miserable mortals to the Grave on a sudden; that tear the Children from their Mothers Breasts; that separate one part of the Family from another, and make them afraid of each others Company; or else send

send them together to the House prepared for all Living; that turn flourishing Cities into solitudes, and put a stop to all Commerce and Trade. Or Famine, that kills by as sure, but by slower methods; That makes them to know they are dying before they die; That causes them to walk to and fro with pale, and meagre, and drooping looks, and turns a fruitful Land into barrenness, where the poor starving Children come begging to their Mothers for Bread, and they have none to give; but are forced to see them die before their Eyes, as *Lam. 4.* Or War, where many Children are deprived of their Fathers, many Wives of their Husbands, many that lived plentifully, bereaved of all their dear and pleasant things; War, which fills every place with Blood and Violence, with Noise and Clamour, and Oppression and Woe; That lays Countries waste and desolate; and sacrifices multitudes of harmless people to its cruel rage and fury: These are the terrible Voice of God, which will cause us to weep, and to be afraid.

5. Consider *Men as associated together in their several Relations*, and so their sorrows, and their cause of weeping is increased. The Courts of Princes have their occasions of grief and trouble; they grieve, tho their grief be more pompous, and clad in a more solemn dress. Those that have a numerous and great Kindred and Alliance, are oftner in Mourning than others; for Death does oftner visit their greater Friends and Acquaintance. Few Families there are without sorrow; that House that now

rejoyces, is quickly turn'd into a House of mourning; and where this day there is nothing but the sound of the Timbrel, the Harp, and the Viol; it may be the next day there is the voice of Crying and Lamentation: How many Parents that have long prayed for Children, and have at length obtained them, see them snatch away with an early stroke, and the flower wither in the blossom that they began to doat upon, and their eyes closed by death as soon as they had but peep'd into the World? and how many do we find in tears, because they do but bring forth Children to the Grave, *and will not be comforted, because they are not*, and find a greater sorrow in parting with them, than in bringing them forth? How many Parents are there, whose Children live several years, to whose Education they contribute all they can, and hope to have them to be the staff and comfort of their Old Age; and when they begin to flourish, a storm comes and blasts the fair and the goodly Fruit; and while they look for abiding-joys from their dutiful obedience, and holy conversation, they are forced to follow the promising and hopeful Youths to the Grave; and mourn as *David*, even for a bad Son; *O Absalom! my son! my son! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom! my son! my son!* Nay again, How many Parents are there weeping for the disobedience of their Children, that are like to be the Heirs of Wrath, and to fall into destruction? it costs them many a tear, and a sigh, to think that their Children are Children of the Devil, and Brands of Hell! How does it sink their Souls,

Souls, to see, that all their Prayers and Exhortations, and all their cost and charge, is like to be in vain ! What sorrow can be greater, than to think, that what they have done for them, will aggravate their condemnation ; and that they must find their Children, their now dear and beloved Children, at the Left-hand of Christ in the great day ; and the thoughts of this sends them mourning to the Grave ! How many Congregations are there mourning for the death of their faithful Ministers, whom they shall never hear, nor with whom they shall never pray more ? it grieves them to see those Stars set, that gave them light ; and those Embassadors called home, that entreated them to be reconciled ! How many Soldiers are bewailing the death of their General, who in the midst of all his Victories, and their Applauses, was on a sudden snatcht away !

6. *Death is another occasion of weeping to the sons of men* as are also many of its violent and quick approaches ; *Eccl. 9. 12. For man knoweth not his time ; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare ; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them.* Hezekiah turn'd his face to the wall, and wept, when he had his summons to depart : and if so good a man was so much concern'd, how much more may the generality be supposed to be concern'd ! It is a very melancholly thought to one in flesh, to think, that he, and his dear Body, must shortly part ; and that the Body, in which he has eat, and drunk, and slept at ease ; which has been treated so kindly,

and cloathed so neatly, shall be turned into the Grave, and there in a very hideous manner consume away. As Children cry when they come into the World, so do they generally weep when they go out again. Must I, often says a dying man, leave you my dear Friends, my comfortable Children, my pleasant Acquaintance, and never see you any more ! I must never eat, nor drink, nor talk with you any more ! I must not walk in my pleasant Gardens, nor survey my Habitation, nor visit my Friends, nor they me, any more for ever ! I am going into the cold, and the lonely Grave ; and must by my self, without your company, travel that unknown and solitary path. The change of state, the greatness of the next World, and the different way of living out of the Body, and the many dreadful pains that are in their last concluding Agonies, make men to see the period of Life with weeping eyes ; and when they are dying, it dissolves their Friends to tears to see their wan and pale looks, to hear their last and dreadful groans ; and immediately after death, it melts them to see the person, with whom a few days before they comfortably discours'd, and lived, now changed into a mere lump of Earth ; for that Soul that made it active and vigorous, is fled away, when they follow him to the Grave ; it troubles them to part ; it troubles them to think what their Friend is, and what they themselves are shortly like to be : and when they come home, the House is no more so pleasant as it was ; they miss one that made it to be so ; and one whom it must never know again

again for ever. Thus mourners not only go about the street, but are almost every-where to be found in every Countrey, and in every Family. *Job 14. 1. Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.*

7. *As to his Soul, man is exposed to abundance of sorrows :* He labours under a miserable darkness in his understanding, and his natural ignorance creates him abundance of trouble and vexation in his soul. He has foolish hopes, and extravagant desires, and a vain curiosity of knowing many things which he shall never know, and then the light of his understanding is apt to be eclipsed and confounded with the irresistible diseases of the body ; so that it is impossible for him to think in sickness after the same manner as he used to do in health : His Will also ministers to his sorrow ; for he wills and affects abundance of things that are contrary to his real interest ; and if he have the things that he is apt to will, they give him new torment and disquiet, and he suffers innumerable miseries, from his precepitant and eager inclinations. Knowledg is the greatest ornament of a rational soul ; and yet that hath its troubles, *Eccles. 1. 18. For in much wisdom there is much grief, and he that increaseth wisdom encreaseth sorrow.* It is not to be attained without great pains and difficulties, without laborious and diligent search, and vast perplexities. Whether we consider the blindness of our understandings, or the intricacy of things themselves, the many dark recesses of Nature, the implication of Causes and Effects, besides those acci-

* Bp. Wil-
kin's Ser-
mons, p.
174.

dental difficulties which are occasioned by the subtilty and intanglement of Error. The variety of intricate Opinions, the many involutions of Controverlies and Disputes, which are apt to whirl a Man about with a Vertigo of contradictory probabilities; and instead of settling, to amuse and distract the mind; so that much study is a wearisomness to the flesh *; and besides, it makes a further trouble to the soul, in regard the more a Man knows, the more he sees there is yet to be known; as a Man, the higher he climbs, sees more and more of the journey that he is to go; and then he that is vers'd in the knowledg of the World, sees abundance of mistakes and disorders which he cannot remedy, and which to behold is very sad; and by knowing a great deal, is liable to abundance of contradiction and opposition from the more peevish, and self-willed, and ignorant part of mankind, that are vex'd because he will not think and say as they do; and they are very prone to censure and condemn the things they do not understand, for it is most easie so to do; whereas to pierce into the Reasons of things, requires a mighty labour, and a succession of deliberate and serious thoughts, to which the nature of Man is averse: And lazily and hastily to judge, requires no trouble; and were it not that it is a man's duty to know, and that his soul, if it have any thing of greatness and amplitude in its faculties, cannot be satisfied without it, it were a much safer and quiet course to be ignorant. Study and painful enquiries after knowledg, do oftentimes exhaust and break our
spirits,

spirits, and prejudice our health, and brings upon us those Diseases to which the careles and thinking seldom are obnoxious, Eccles. 1. 13, 14, 15. *I have seen all the works that are done under the Sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit; that which is crooked, cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting, cannot be numbred.*

CHAP. II.

Shewing, that the fall of Adam was the cause of all our miseries; and in how excellent a condition the blessed Angels are; and the folly of such as expect to meet with nothing in the world, but what is easie and pleasant.

Inf. I. **S**EEING the life of man is a state of weeping, what sin there must needs be in the fall of Adam, that has provoked God so much as to send so many miseries upon his own Creatures! Had not he fallen, we had always rejoyced, and never mourned; we had always sung the praises of God with delight, and never have hang'd our harps upon the willows. We should have always lived upon the food of Angels, pure and Coelestial joys, and not have had that bread of sorrows which we now have to feed upon. We may justly cry out, O Adam! what was it that you did when you tasted the forbidden fruit! Why did you ruin your self and us your help-
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less posterity in one day ; and by one Act you turned the pleasant world into a place of wo, and made your self and us, of free men to become prisoners of this Earth. It was a sad day indeed that opened a Sluce to that vast Inundation of miseries that have from that time overwhelmed the lower world ; thence came storms and tempests, wars and desolations, and all the burdens under which we groan, and which we cannot escape. 'Tis to this Spring that we may trace all our troubles. Oh how happily, how pleasantly might we have lived, had we not Apostatiz'd ! And now we can only say, Wo unto us, for we have sinned ! and when any Plagues molest us, can only say, this is the fruit of our own choice ; this is the product of our own Iniquity ! Tho, thanks be to God, through the blood of Jesus Christ we have a way to escape at length from all those Plagues and Sins.

Inf. 2. Seeing this life is full of weeping, how much more happy are the blessed Angels than we ! At the view of the Harmony and order of the Worlds Creation, those Sons of the morning sang together ; it pleased them to see their Creator's glory so appear, and they still continue to sing and praise him ; not a sad look has from that time to this, clouded their faces ; not a troubled thought has possess'd their minds ; those holy Spirits are always joyful, serene, and undisturb'd ; they are not linkt to such bodies as we are, and consequently not liable to so many thousand miseries. A soul in flesh is forced to sympathize with its neighbour and companion the body, and is altered or changed as to its joys and
griefs,

griefs, according to the several objects that are suitable or disagreeable to that; and yet our imbodied condition gives us some privileges, of which the Angels being Spirits, are not capable; for by this means we can glorifie God by suffering for him, and by our patience in our several trials, convert many to the faith of Christ, which their Spiritual nature gives them no opportunity to do. As long as we are united to the body, so long must we expect to be afflicted; and when this union is happily dissolved, then does the time of our freedom and our pleasure come. In the Resurrection we shall be *as the Angels of God*, we shall not be busied in those perplexing and intricate affairs that now molest us. We shall be like to them in vigor, and activity, and joy. We shall have bodies indeed even then, but such as will be spiritualized, such as will not be capable of mourning and lamentation; nor by their heaviness, their pains, and indispositions, be any more an hindrance to the nimbler operations of our Souls; and it should comfort us to think, that one day we shall have such excellent Companions, so knowing and so kind and loving as Angels are, and that then we shall rejoice as well as they, and with our common praise, give our Great Creator an Eternal Hymn of Thanks.

Inf. 3. *They have a wrong notion of the life of man, that expect to find nothing in it but what is pleasant!* And who, because now their mountain stands strong, say with David, *That they shall never be moved!* Psal. 30. 6, 7. How clearly soever their Sun now shines, yet sooner or later
storms

storms and darkness will overtake them. The day is coming, that will cast a vail upon all their smiling glory, and turn their laughter into mourning and lamentation. For *man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards*, Job 5. 7. This world is as an Hospital, or *Lazaretto*, full of various miseries and calamities; and therefore those that promise nothing to themselves but diversion and mirth, and soft and easie pleasures, labour under manifold mistakes, which arise from these two Causes.

1. *VVant of Experience and Consideration.* Hence it is that young people, and such as have lived but a little while, are mightily taken with the sweetnes and delight of life; whereas those that have tried it some years longer, find several crosses and disappointments and vexations in it; and tho the morning of their day was clear, yet they see many thick Clouds gather as the shadows of the Evening are drawing on. It is nothing else, but gross ignorance that occasions the loud and mad Triumphs of so great a part of the world, for if they did but a little survey the condition of their suffering-neighbours, and the weakness of their own bodies, the uncertainty of their hopes, and the vanity of their desires, they would sit down and bewail their miseries, and they would find their biggest joys to be contin'd with grief. Or,

2. *It arises from this, That they resolve not to disturb their present ease and pleasure with any mournful meditations.* They'l shut their ears against all sad and doleful stories, hasten from the sight of all such dismal objects as would make them
grave

grave and solid ; they will not ruffle their thoughts with anticipations of evil, and future trouble ; they are now at ease, and they hope they shall be so very long ; and this false expectation has no other cause than their unwillingness and aversion to think of a coming change ; and because they feel no pain, sickness, or inconvenience, they will not spoil their Musick with groans and sighs ; they will eat, drink, and be merry, and hang sorrow and cast care away ; but as all the mirth of Sailors cannot hinder the winds and the storms, so this insensibleness and jollity does not keep the evil day further off ; but rather swells the Clouds, and lays in matter for a more durable and intollerable sorrow ; they may in their Jovial humours, and with their full Bowls drown their own understandings, but they cannot by this means overwhelm their miseries, which after the fumes of the grateful Wine are past, will have a Resurrection ; they may say indeed, as *Isa. 57. 11.* *Come, we will fill our selves, and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant ;* but perhaps that morrow they may never see ; or if they do, it may bring along with it some great or unavoidable calamity. We know *David* said in his Prosperity, *I shall never be moved ;* and yet as soon as God hid his face, he was troubled, *Psal. 30. 6, 7.* so unreasonable is it to conclude from our present delight, that we shall never grieve. We may as well argue, because we are now in health, we shall never be sick ; or because we are now alive, we shall never die. Such false Conclusions, and such vain hopes, do but encrease our after-troubles,

troubles, and make them more heavy; as it is said of *Babylon the Great*, Rev. 18. 7. *How much she hath glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; therefore shall her Plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine.* Our miseries are sure, but our joys uncertain; our pleasures endure but a moment, but our sorrows last a long time; our pleasures no sooner begin to live, but they begin to die; and when we would with art prolong their date, their continuance occasions either torment or loathing. Grief (as one says *) is more familiar to man, than pleasure; for one vain contentment, we meet with a thousand real sorrows; these come uncalled, and present themselves of their own proper motion; they are linkt one to another; but pleasures are sought for with pain, and we are forced to pay more for them than they are worth. Sorrows are sometimes entirely pure, and touch us to the quick, as they make us incapable of Consolation; but pleasures are never without some mixture of sorrow; they are always dipt in bitterness, and we are much more sensible of pain than of pleasure, for a slight disease troubleth all our most solid Contentments; a Fever is able to make Conquerors forget their Victories; and to blot out of their minds all the pomp of their Triumphs. Tho in some cases we may make our sorrows greater in our imagination than they are in reality; for we are more ingenious and more particular in the computation of our griefs, than of our mercies.

And

* *Senault*
use of the
Passions,
p. 475.

And many a thorn that annoys us, is of our own planting; and for one Cross that God sends, our uneasiness and impatience makes a thousand more. We apprehend some things to be evil, which are not truly so; and sometimes we augment our real evils beyond their natural proportion, and so add new weight to that burden which made us groan before; yet for all that, and abstracting from our Irregularities since the fall, man is a very dolorous and mournful Creature; and our being so, should excite us to take heed that we do not wound our selves afresh when we are already wounded; nor lay in matter of new griefs when our unavoidable ones may be great enough. There are two ways by which we aggravate our own miseries: 1. By putting an higher value upon things than they really deserve; by loving them more than we ought; and then the Separation that is made between them and us, gives us a more weighty sorrow. 2. By seeking out of our selves for many things to make us happy; whereas we should labour that our souls be duly order'd, and our desires kept within their just and lawful bounds.

Inf. IV. We have cause to admire the wisdom of the Divine Providence, that seeing the life of man is so very miserable, he has order'd it also to be very short. Tho our days are evil, yet they are but few. And that as the day is for hard labour, there is a succession of comfortable nights wherein we may go to rest. We find it a long tedious while to be in sorrows for fifty or sixty years; but how loud would
our

our groans be were we condemned to this toyl, and these weepings for many thousand years ! The greater our misery is (as one says) the less while it is like to last ; the sorrows of a man's spirit being like ponderous weights, which by the greatness of their burthen, make a swifter motion, and descend into the Grave to rest and ease our wearied Limbs, and to knock our fetters off, that eat as to the very bones. Thus I have shewed what sorrows are common to the sons and daughters of men. I am in the next place to shew what peculiar occasions of weeping Christians have above other men.

C H A P. III.

Of the peculiar Occasions of weeping that good Christians have more than other men.

1. **T**HE Christian weeps for his own sins. He is convinced of his own folly, and bewails it ; he has by the inlightning of the Spirit a more tender heart than others have ; a more distinct view of the odiousness and malignity, of the poisonous nature, and dangerous qualities of Sin ; and that which was pleasant in the commission, he finds by dear experience to be bit-as gall and Wormwood afterwards. This weeping is not the effect of mere softness, or weakness of temper ; or from a want of courage : there is nothing more reasonable, more
just

just, or honourable, than to bewail our Offences that we are guilty of, against the Law of God. And to what purpose hath he given us Innocent Passions, but that they should be moved when suitable Objects present themselves? He says with *David*, Psal. 51. 3. *I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me*: and such a sight of an Object so disagreeable, pierces and wounds his very Soul, and makes it to dissolve in a genuine and kindly grief and trouble; saying, Oh! what have I done against my God, and my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit! Oh! how basely have I forgot a gracious, and a loving God; a God that has remembred me all my days for good! He has loved me, and I have hated him; He has called me, and I have disobeyed his Voice; He has provided for me, and I have rebelled: He has been a Father, but I have been undutiful, and prodigal, and disobedient: and now his slighted, his forgotten Love and Kindness wounds me to the very Soul. Oh! what did I think of, when I did not think of him! What was it that my vain, foolish heart loved, when I loved not him that is altogether amiable! What was it that I cared for, or in what did I spend my time, that I did not care for my Soul, and the pleasing of my God; who spared me, and bore with me with an admirable patience! *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men!* Job 7. 20. I will put my mouth in the dust, I will loath and abhor my self for mine Iniquities, if so be there may be hope. I have wandred, but my wandrings have cost me dear; I have been in a

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strange Land, and with tears will I return home; saying, *Bless me, even me also, O my Father!* And then the Love of Jesus contrains the poor Christian to be sorrowful; saying, Did he leave his Heaven for me, and for me that many times would not leave a sin for him; for me, that was a lost Sheep, a dying Malefactor, an Enemy by my Evil Works! Did he come to rescue me, when I was in the very jaws of the Roaring Lyon, and at the door of Hell; and shall I not be grieved to think, that I have requited him so ill for all his Love! they were my sins that made him astonisht, and troubled, and exceeding sorrowful even unto death; and yet alas, I have done what I could to increase his Agonies by my new sins: It was my sin that filled the bitter Cup, that betrayed, that whipt, that exposed to so injurious usage the Son of God: my sin that wounded his Breast, and raked in his Sides, and nailed him to the Tree, and made him dye; and can I look upon what I have done, and not be troubled? Can my eyes behold him hanging on the Cross, and not affect my heart? Never was there any Sorrow like to his Sorrow, never was there any Love like to his Love: Never was there Disobedience more inexcusable, never was Sin more sinful, than mine has been! I have often made light of that that prest him down to the Grave. I have rejoyced at that which made him mourn and weep, but I will do so again no more for ever. And then it troubles the good Christian to think how often he has refused the motions of the blessed Spirit, and how when the Spirit has

has moved upon his heart with a design to do him good, he hath sent him grieved and vexed away. All this is occasion of grief, tho it do not always express it self in tears; for there is a rational sorrow as well as a sensitive one; and tho this may be more passionate, yet the other is more lasting and durable. Those that are converted in their younger days, the warmth and heat of their glowing and beginning zeal, does more easily dissolve and melt them into tears, and then the rivers flow more than they do afterwards; but yet when the flood ceases, the fruitfulness appears, and when their tears are dried up, yet their hatred of sin remains; for these outward expressions of sorrow are very much influenced by the temper and constitution of the body, 2 Cor. 7. 10, 11. As in the first, so 'tis in the second birth, as soon as they are born, they cry. No sooner are they brought from darkness into marvellous light, but they wonder at their folly, and at the grace of God that saved them from it, and that wonder does produce love and grief. First their hearts are softened with his love, and then they mourn for their Provocations; tho this wherewith good Christians bewail their sins, is not a lazy grief, but attended with serious endeavours of new obedience, as the Husbandman after the profitable showers of rain sets himself with a renewed industry to cultivate the Ground: and it is but reasonable that our eyes, that are too often the instruments of sin to us, should by tears help us to bewail that

sin, *Isa. 38. 15.* I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my Soul.

2 *Those that are good Christians, weep also for the sins of others.* The love they have to the name of God, causes them to grieve for the reflections and dishonours that are thrown upon it by wicked men. They cannot without sorrow, behold or hear of the sins of men in general; the sins of Kingdoms, and Provinces, and Towns; the sins of Families; the sins of their Fellow-citizens, their Brethren, and their Neighbours: the tears that they shed, are tears of compassion for the very sad and miserable condition of the World. Whilst others make a mock at sin, and through the blindness of their folly, know not what they do, good men lament their unconcernedness and insensibility, whilst they see them sporting on the hole of Aspes, and touching Firebrands, and Death. They cannot see men treat their heavenly Father with insolence and scorn, but their hearts, in a just zeal for his glory, rise against them, not with indecent passions for their ruine, but in an hearty longing for their reformation; *Psal. 119. 138.* *Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* Thus saith the Prophet to his hearers, *Jer. 13. 17.* *My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears.* Our love to our Neighbour, and our zeal for God's glory, does oblige us to this; it must grieve us to think what men are doing when they sin, how great a God they provoke to punish them, how great a misery they are bringing on their own souls. It must

must grieve us to think how unsafe a way they go, and what a dismal end will be to that way, *Phil. 3. 19. Jer. 9. 1. The Prophet wishes, Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.* And yet (as one observes) when he pronounced these sad words, the misery of the *Jews* was not arrived.

Dubosc. Sermons, pag. 1.

Jerusalem did as yet subsist in its Magnificence and Splendor, its Temple had not lost that admirable Beauty which made it the wonder of the world; its Palaces had lost nothing of their Pomp, its Walls and Fortresses were entire, and the Daughter of *Sion* was Princess among the Provinces; but he spoke thus, foreseeing that their abounding sins and their hardness and obstinacy would certainly bring upon them the Judgments of God. We must consider what we were our selves when in the house of bondage, and serving divers lusts, how enslaved and how miserable, that so the remembrance we have of our former danger may quicken us to do others all the good we can, that they may not fall into hell whilst we are looking on, and do not all that is in our power to hinder their going thither. To this compassionate sorrow we may be excited by the kind example of our Lord, *Luke 19. 41.* he wept for those that rejoiced, he pitied them that had no pity for their own souls; because their hearts were hardened, his was very soft and tender. It is matter of mourning and lamentation, to consider how few there are that profess Religion in its strictness; and among those few, how many that are scandalous or

* Norris's
Discourse
on the
Beatitudes
pag. 44.

backsliders, or hypocrites. It has been often observed, that among the bitter Ingredients of our Lords passion, this was none of the least, to foresee that there would be so many, who by their final impenitence and persevering in wickedness, would receive no benefit by it*. And if we may judg by proportion, the Angels in Heaven, who rejoice at the conversion of one sinner, do also mourn and lament for the Irreclaimable wickedness of so many Millions in the world: To a zealous Magistrate, it is an occasion of sorrow to see in his Dominions the great King and Ruler of the world so little valued; and his grief will stir him up to use all the wholesome methods he can, by good Laws, and a necessary severity, to keep the Divine Laws and Authority from being scorned and trampled on by profane and blasphemous sinners: To a good Parent, it is an occasion of grief to see the undutifulness and miscarriages of his children; and very cutting to think that he has brought forth such as shall be his torment, and factors for the Devil. To a Minister, it is an occasion of grief, when he meets with a careless Auditory, or with an unfruitful people, that he is like to see them perish under the means of safety, and that he is like to be their accuser in the great day, and that they are like to be separated for ever when the judgment comes; it is with an heavy heart, and many a tear that he thinks of their forlorn state, *Rom. 9. 1, 2. Ye know after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, Act. 20. 19. For the space of three years*

years I ceased not to weep every one night and day with tears, ver. 31.

3. *They weep for the manifold tribulations and persecutions they meet withal.* When God is pleased for their chastisement to let loose the passions and the fury of wicked men, whose tender mercies are cruelty. *Cant. 2. 2. As the Lilly among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters.* She is beautiful and glorious, but surrounded with difficulties and tribulations. *Psal. 84. 6. Passing through the valley of Baca, they make it a well, the rain also filleth the pools.* They are satisfied, indeed, to endure in the hope of Heaven; but yet their sorrows and torments make them go weeping thither. They have sense as well as Religion; and their sensible nature, whether they will or no, will be affected, they cannot be sick but they must groan and sigh as well as others; they cannot feel tortures, racks, tedious Imprisonments, and flames, without shrinking a little at them; even the Apostles, those great and courageous believers, were troubled, and perplexed, tho they were not overthrown, *2 Cor. 4. 8.* In times of Persecution there is a general license of doing mischief, a bold oppressing of the poor, a scornful despising of the afflicted and the desolate, as they complain, *Psal. 123. 4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud;* and the scorn of evil men is so base a thing, that the most patient cannot but be somewhat concerned at it, *Psal. 42. 11. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? when I remem-*

ber these things, I pour out my soul in me. 'Tis true, the servants of Christ esteem it abundant matter of joy when they fall into divers tribulations; their minds are quiet, and very well satisfied; they love their Master, and they will never leave him; they will follow him to the Cross, and die with him there; but inasmuch as they are composed of flesh and blood, and have a nature that is tender and soft, and averse to suffering, as well as that of others, and that has several things that engage it to the world, several Relations and Friends to part withal, they cannot with respect to these, leave this Earth without some grief and sorrow; as the Hearers of *Paul* wept that they should see his face no more; and it was even like to break his heart that he was to leave friends so affectionate, so loving, and so kind. And we must think they did not part at last without flowing eyes on either side, *Act. 21. 13.*

4. *Christians, however easie in their own Circumstances, have still occasion of sorrow from that sympathy that they have with their brethren that are in distress.* The spirit of our compassionate Lord dwells in their hearts; and as he is afflicted with all the afflictions of his people, so are they; they are all the members of the same body, and one part of the body cannot rejoice whilst another part thereof is in pain. Thus they weep with them that weep, *Rom. 12. 15.* To hear of the desolations of others, is extremely grievous to them; nor can they laugh and be merry whilst others sigh and groan, see *Jer. 4. 31. Ch. 8. 21, 22. Jer. 14. 17, to the 20.* They cannot

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not cheer themselves with Musick, when the Harps of others are hanging on the Willows, *Lam. 1. 12, 16. Ch. 2. 11, 12.* And this Book of the *Lamentations* is so very lamentable, that it very well deserves to be read and considered by us; that so the miseries of our Neighbours may affect us as they ought to do, *Job 30. 35.* *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?* It must be a temper very Hellish, that has no relentings for the sufferings of others, even such a *Diabolical temper* as reigneth in *France* at this day; where by the encouragement of a *Cruel King*, and as *Cruel a Clergy*, the poor Protestants have undergone barbarous and more than Heathen severities; if they had any thing humane left, they could not have used those poor Harmless and Innocent people as they have done. But they have long since degenerated into Wolves, and to this day retain their brutal and savage nature, tearing to pieces the sheep of Christ without any provocation; and tho some have had such a brazen impudence as to say they have all along used with them nothing but sweet and gentle methods, yet there are Witnesses enough, and too many, (if it pleased God) in all parts of *Europe*, that tell us Melancholy stories of their Hellish Cruelties; had there been the lowest degrees of Christianity left in that Execrable Country, they could not, they durst not have proceeded to such barbarities as they have done, where neither the Gray hairs of the most aged and venerable, neither the Tears of Widows, nor the Sighs of Prisoners could ever yet prevail

vail for the least mitigation. They have exceeded the worst of former Ages in the cruelty of their torments ; any other eyes would weep but theirs, to see what they inflict on their fellow-creatures ; any other hearts would soften at the groans and the crys of so many miserable people ; but nothing can make an Impression upon them, their Dungeons, Gallies, and Racks, and Gibbets, are the only things they can think of wherewith to vex such as are better than themselves, such as have been guilty of no crime, unless it were *an excess of Loyalty to a King, who is an enemy to mankind*, as well as *their enemy*. By whose allowance the vilest of men are permitted to do all those villanous and wicked things which raise a just horror in all that have any zeal to the glory of God. To see such feeding their cruel eyes with woful spectacles of the distressed and sorrowful, whom they have made to be such. The most pathetick melting expressions have not been able to draw the least pity from the breasts of these inhumane Monsters. Will men never be ashamed of their Antichristian barbarity ? will they never know that it is the Beast in the *Revelations*, who makes himself drunk with the blood of Saints, devours their flesh, makes war upon them, and overcomes them ; and is therefore called *Beast, Lion, Bear, Leopard* ; for he must have renounced Reason and Humanity, and be transformed into a Savage Beast, that behaves himself towards Christians as the Church of *Rome* behaves it self towards us. Those *French Persecutors* are so bad, that they cannot be reproached ; we cannot if we

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we would, bespatter or throw dirt upon them, they are already so defiled ; 'tis impossible to create in the minds of others, any Idea of them that shall be base enough ; and it is our shame, the stain of our Country, and a dishonour to the Name of an *English man*, that in our Country, in ours that is naturally inclined to pity and compassion to the miserable, there should be found any that wish well to a Tyrant so tyrannical, and to a people so nourished, and so fed with blood, as his Soldiers and Creatures are ; 'tis our judgment that we are so blinded, and so much stupified, and thrown into so deep a sleep that we do not perceive our own blindness. But I should be very sorry if I spoke to any such ; I hope, and I believe that there are none here so much under the Curse of God ; a Curse the more terrible, as it is contrary to all that love of God, our Neighbour, and our Country, that we ought to have ; and if we are any way curst, 'tis because we have had no more compassion for our Brethren that have suffered such grievous things ; that we have wept no more at the sight of their sorrows, but that we have still too many among us of the Complexion of those in *Amos 6. 6.* Men are generally unaffected with the miseries of others ; they are like the Priest and the Levite that left the poor wounded person without any help ; they fix not their eyes or their minds on sad objects, for they find them to be very disagreeable.

V. *Another occasion of weeping to good Christians, is both from the Duties of Religion, and the more than ordinary Providences and Dispensations of God,*
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that call them to it. There are several things, which though in the consequence they are very pleasant, yet are in themselves very sorrowful; as that which I have already mentioned, the bitterness of repentance; the trouble for the afflictions of others; and also the Duties of *self-denial and mortification; of crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof; of dying daily, and of keeping our hearts weaned from an inordinate affection* to the Enjoyments and Comforts of the World. All good Christians are to be in heaviness for a season, and to sow in tears: And to these may be added the Calls we have to more *publick and solemn Humiliations*, by the necessity of our own Affairs, the Judgments of God, and the Pride, and Rage, and Success of his and our Enemies; and this is the Duty to which we are now called; and let us take care that our days of Fasting and Prayers, may be mingled with the Tears of a true Repentance and Contrition, that so God who has been for us hitherto, may not be against us; and that we may not smart under Spiritual Judgments, which of all others are most formidable and severe, according to that in *Isa. 22. 12, 13.* Thus good Christians have many just subjects of weeping; they weep to see themselves as in Exile, and at a distance from their beloved Countrey; They weep to find themselves compassed about with many infirmities, and unbecoming passions, that cause them to be engaged in continual War; They weep that they are exposed to so many furious assaults of the Devil, and that they have so little strength wherewith to resist him; They weep

weep when they consider that their Good and Gracious God, is so much dishonoured and forgot in his own World.

Inf. 1. *What need all good Christians have of Faith and Patience ; of Faith, to conclude that God does all very well in Holiness and Wisdom, tho he suffer the World and the Church to groan under so many miseries, and tribulations ; and of patience, to submit to what he appoints for our Lot, and not in the least to repine or murmur at it. Without Faith we shall be apt to be stumbled at these seeming disorders, and the unequal distributions of his Providence ; and without Patience, we shall be apt to struggle under the necessary Cross, to be tired, and to say, It is in vain to wait upon the Lord.*

Inf. 2. *Good Christians have great Reason quietly to leave the World, and to dye when God shall be pleased to call them : It is a World of misery, of sorrows and vexation. We should not be fond of our Chains, nor delight in Tears, nor embrace our Grievs ; but remember we shall leave all these troublesome things behind us, when we come to lye down in the quiet Grave : For there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest, Job 3. 17. We do not sure esteem this strange Land to be better than our Father's House ; we do not think that the Vale of Tears is better than the Joys of Heaven ; to that Heaven then, let us often lift up our weeping eyes ; with the hope of that let us comfort our sad and mournful hearts ; thither let us hasten, there*

there let us long to be ; into that Haven let us steer our distressed and weary Souls ; Let us breathe after that Paradise that shall not be molested with the Poysonous venom of the Serpent, and where no Thorns or Bryars grow: Let us not be fond of a perpetual Storm, nor be so foolish, as to think our Sighs better than Praises and Hallelujahs. Let us hasten in our desires from this diseased World, which by its low scituation is apt to suffer an inundation of innumerable miseries ; and prepare for that World, where there is an Eternal Health and Joy.

C H A P. IV.

Shewing what dreadful apprehensions a soul has, that is under desertion ; and in several respects how very sad and doleful its condition is, from the Author's own Experience.

TH E next thing I design to insist upon is, To shew that the time of God's forsaking of a soul, is a very dark and mournful time ; 'tis not only night, but a weeping, stormy night ; and it may not be unuseful to you, who have, it may be, hitherto lived in the beams and chearful light of day, to know *what passes in this sorrowful and doleful night* : And in this matter, I will not borrow Information from others,

others, but give you *My own Experi-*
ence.

I: In this night the deserted soul is overwhelmed with continual thoughts of the Holiness, and Majesty, and Glory of the Lord; nor does it think of him with any manner of delight, according to that of Asaph, Psal. 77. 3. I remembred God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. And in how deplorable a Case is such a Soul, that cannot think of its God and its Creator, but with grief and sorrow! That fixes upon nothing in him, but his terrible and severe Attributes! In other Cases, when a Man is distressed on Earth, and beholds vexation and disquiet there, he can lift up his eyes towards Heaven, and see joy and comfort for him there; but in this woful Case, there is neither the light of the Sun, the Moon, or the Stars, for many days; the face of God is hid and covered with a dreadful Cloud, Job 31. 23. Destruction from God was a terror to me; and because of his highness, I could not endure.

Secondly, The deserted soul in this mournful night does look upon God as its enemy; and as intending its hurt and ruin by the sharpness of his dispensations; and this makes it to be incapable of receiving any consolation from the Creatures; for will it say to them, Alas, if God be mine enemy, as I apprehend him to be, which of you can be my friend? I have a dreadful sound of his displeasure in my ears, and which of you can bring me any glad tidings? If his power, his Irresistible power be against me, who can keep off the killing-blow! Job 19. 6. Know

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now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net; he hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. And so *v. 9, 10, 11.* and *Psal. 88. 7.* Thy wrath lyeth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. If in such desertion, God were apprehended to be upon a design of the future happiness and welfare of the soul, it would bear up with courage, or with hope; but having no such belief, it must needs sink and languish. The stroke that wounds us in such a case, is the more painful, as edged with a sense of wrath. *Psal. 102. 9, 10.* I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. Thus does the weeping person vent his sorrows. God never gives to his people such a bitter Cup, but he mingles love and mercy with it; but alas, I taste nothing but gall and wormwood, nothing but misery and vexation: He is with his people, but he has forsaken me, he has cast me into a fiery furnace, where I am daily burnt and scorcht, and he is not with me there: He is unto me as a Roaring Lion, and who can turn away his powerful wrath! *Ruth 1. 20.* The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I have often heard, that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living God, and I now find it to be so; all the wrath of men is nothing to his; one frown of his is more intolerable than all their rage and persecution. *Job 16. 12, 13, 14.* I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder, he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me
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up for his mark, his Archers compass me round about ; he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare ; he poureth out my gall upon the ground, Job 10. 16, 17. Oh what anguish, what desolation is caused in the soul by such thoughts as these ! I dare not, says the mourning person, look up to Heaven, for there I see how great a God I have against me ; I dare not look into his word, for there I see all his threats as so many barbed arrows to strike me to the heart : I dare not look into the Grave, because thence I am like to have a doleful Resurrection : And what can a poor Creature do, that apprehends the Almighty to be his enemy ? It is a common thing to say, why do you so lament and mourn ? you have many mercies left, many friends that pray for you, and that pity you ; Alas ! what help is there in all this, if God himself be gone ! nothing is then lookt upon as a mercy. And as for the prayers of others, will the distressed person say, they can do me no good, unless I have faith, and I find I have none at all ; for that would purifie and cleanse my heart, and I do nothing else but sin ; and God, as he is holy, must set himself against me his Enemy.

3ly, In this doleful night, the soul hath no evidence at all of its former grace ; so that in this night, the Sun is not only set, but there is not one Star appears ; such an one looks upon himself as altogether void of the Grace of God ; he looks upon all his former duties to have been insincere or hypocritical ; he feels his heart hardened at present, and concludes that it was never tender ; finds himself at present listless and in-
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disposed, and concludes that he never had any true life and motion, and expresse his sorrows after this, or the like manner : I thought I had belong'd to God, but now I find I am none of his : I thought I had been upright, but now I see I was mistaken; the storm is come, and that house that I built upon the sand, is now washt away ; those that are Christ's, he will enable to persevere to the end ; but I am fallen from grace ; I am an Apostate; if I had any share in the Intercession of the Great Redeemer, he would not leave me thus sad and desolate. I thought that I had been planted in his Vineyard, and brought forth fruit, but now I am cut down as a barren tree : Oh, how greatly have I been deceived, that imagined my self to be an Heir of Heaven, and am now seiz'd with the pangs of Hell ! I now see that I was never right, never born again, never renewed by the Spirit, never changed from death to life. And Oh what will become of me, that flattered my own soul to ruin ! that thought my self safe when I was not ; and well when I was diseased ! To come to misery after I thought so long of happiness is a double misery : I am like, after all my prayers, my endeavours, and my hopes, to be a Reprobate, and a cast-away. And such a soul concludes it self to be in a condition much more dangerous than they are, that never named the name of Christ, nor ever pretended to Religion, because it reckons their misery will be much more tollerable than its own ; it judges it self to be an Hypocrite, and then all the threats that are made against such, do every moment
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overwhelm it with inexpressible confusion. Thus the Graces of the Spirit, and the former fruits of holiness, are not discerned in this sad and mournful night.

Fourthly, *During this sadness, the soul cannot think of Christ himself with any comfort.* For thus it argues; He will be a Saviour to none but those that believe; I have no faith, and therefore he will be no Saviour to me; he that is to his Servants as the Lamb of God, will be to me as the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*; he that deals gently with them, will tear me to pieces. I have heard of his sufferings and his death; but if his blood has not cleansed and purified me, I am like to perish for all that. I heard his voice, and I disobeyed it; I heard his Gospel, and did not improve it, and now even the glad tidings of Salvation are not so to me: I did not know in the long day that I had, the things that belong'd unto my peace, and now they are hid from mine eyes. Now I have to deal with the great and the dreadful God himself, and I have none to plead my cause. Oh how can I resist his power, or bear his wrath! Christ indeed called me, but I did not open to him, and now he calls no more; he seems to be angry and enraged against me for my disobedience; and tho I have cried sometimes, *Have mercy on me, thou Son of David!* he passes away, and does not regard my cries. And, O what shall I do when he comes in the Clouds of Heaven, when I am to stand at his Bar, and to be punished as an unbeliever! To others, that will be a day of Refreshment; but what will it be to me! the

thoughts of it are now amazing ! And thus by a sense of unbelief the deserted soul is plunged in the waves, and sees no way of escape ; and by this Unbelief it thinks of God as absolutely considered, and the thoughts of him are as terrible as if there were no Mediator ; and it is continually saying, I have all my sins to answer for, and have none to undertake for me ; I am condemned, and have none to procure a pardon and salvation for me.

Fifthly, *In this Night the soul is full of terror ;* and how can it be otherwise, when every thought of God, and of Christ, overwhelms it ! *Job 6. 4. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poyson whereof drinketh up my spirit ; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* Such arrows that are shot by an Almighty arm, with a great power and force, they must needs, being so directed, pierce very deep ; deep and painful must the wounds be that a God makes ; and then they are poysoned arrows too, that being dipt in his wrath, inflame the wounds they make, and put the distressed person into pain and anguish inexpressible. Night is a time of terror, especially in commotions, uproars, and the like mischiefs, *Psal. 91. 5.* and in this night it is much more so, when a man's own Conscience discharges a thousand accusations against him for his guilt ; for then every sin gives a blow ; and altogether being set in array, make a formidable force ; and when God sets on peculiar impressions of his wrath, and it falls upon the naked soul with its scorching burning drops, there is not then one quiet thought,

thought, nor one easie moment, all is amazement, confusion and wo. *Lam. 3. 3. Surely against me is he turned, he turneth his hand against me all the day.* A person that is thus distress'd, sits and muses on his misery, and would gladly find something that might be comfortable; but he cannot; what he first thinks of, is tormenting; he changes that uneasie thought for another, and that is as tormenting as the first; there is a circulation of flaming disquiet thoughts, and such a person dwells as in a fiery Furnace, or as in a thicket of briers, which way soever he turns himself, he is pained and wounded; all the terrible places of Scripture that are made against the wicked, do continually present themselves to his consideration, and he thinks that he shall most certainly have their portion; every thing in nature that is frightful, frights him, as still believing God to be against him; from all the terrible things imaginable he fetches something that does still more afflict him; and thus he will be imagining: Suppose I were to be sawn asunder, to be burnt, to be flea'd alive, or to be torn to pieces; Oh what a sad thing would that be! and yet I am in a case worse than all this, for I am now continually racked with guilt; and am like to be in Hell for ever. The terrors of the Lord we may feel indeed, but we cannot express them; they are so very terrible; they wound our most sensible and tender part; they cause our very souls to pine and languish away; they fix our minds to the contemplation of every thing that is sad and doleful; they fill us with confusion; and

Heman says, *Pf. 88. 15.* they are terrors that compass us round about, they seize upon every faculty, and distress us in every part; to have God against us, his holiness to dazle us, his Power to overthrow us, his Law to condemn us, our Consciences to accuse us, is the sum of terrors!

Sixthly, *Fear is another occasion of sorrow*, and the night is usually a time of horror; we are apt then to be imposed upon with false, as well as with real dangers. We can think of nothing but our misery; and the continual unavoidable thinking of it, makes us more miserable, *Job 13. 21.* these fears are as so many Fetters from which we cannot fly; and when we think to shake them off, we put our selves to more pain. *If I say I will forget my complaints, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort my self, I am afraid of all my sorrows; I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent, Job 9. 27, 28.* we are frightened with the Greatness and Majesty of God, with the Glory of his Being, and the Thunder of his Power: We are frightened with the view of our innumerable sins, and with the dangers that attend them; the thoughts of Heaven fright us, because we think we have lost that blessed place; and the thoughts of Hell are no less frightful, because we think we shall soon be there; the thoughts of life are frightful, because 'tis with anguish and horror that we live; nor can we bear the thoughts of death, because we dare not die.

Seventhly, *'Tis a night of weeping to deserted souls, because they find no heart to pray, and no life in prayer; they fall upon their knees, and cover*
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the Altar of the Lord with tears, but he seems not to regard them ; they beg, and he gives them no relief; they cry and he does not answer; and this fills them with shame and grief, *Lam.* 3. 7, 8. the thoughts of such poor people are in a continual hurry, and so are very full of wandrings in the performance of their duty : Grief, by saddening the spirits, destroys the freedom of our speech ; for joy is the mother of Eloquence and fluency ; and when they would move up towards Heaven, this sorrow damps their vigor, and makes them that they cannot fly ; and finding they are still perplex'd even after prayer, and still as uncomfortable as before, they are apt to throw it off, and say, It is vain to pray ; as *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 28. 15. *God is departed from me, and answers me no more.* And sorrow is naturally a very dull and sluggish thing; a man has no heart to go about any work when he is very sad ; and this faintness occasions a new trouble; we are vexed when we do not pray ; and when we would, we cannot. Sorrows damp our faith, our love, and our hope, and so spoil our duties ; for without these, they are without life, and without acceptance ; and sometimes our grief is so violent, that it finds no vent, it strangles us, and we are overcome. *I am so troubled, that I cannot speak*, *Psal.* 77. 4. It is with us in our desertions as with a man that gets a slight hurt, at first he walks up and down, but not looking betimes to prevent a growing mischief, the neglected wound begins to fester, or to gangrene, and brings him to greater pain and loss ; so it is with us many times in our

Spiritual sadness; when we are first troubled, we pray and pour out our souls before the Lord; but afterwards the waters of our grief drown our crys, and we are so overwhelmed, that if we might have all the world we cannot pray, or at least we can find no enlargement, no life, no pleasure in our prayers; and God himself seems to take no delight in them, and that makes us more sad. *Psal. 22. 1.*

Eighthly, *Such have no patience wherewith to bear their evils*; Oh who is he that can bear the wrath of God! one thought of him as a reconciled Father, would sweeten the most heavy Cross; but one view of him as an enemy, causes all our strength to depart, and melts our very souls. In bodily evils the mind lends its assistance, and furnishes the natural spirits with courage; but when its self is weakned and troubled, what is it able to do? the wounded soul is most commonly fretful and impatient; the sight of Heaven inspires our breasts with vital heat, and makes us quiet and submissive under every dispensation; but the daily sight and fear of Hell, fills us with tumult and disorder; the language of deserted people for the most part is in groans, and in their prayers they *chatter as a Crane, or a Swallow, or mourn as a Dove, Isa. 38. 14. Job 13. 20, 21.*

Ninthly, *They usually see no prospect of relief or deliverance, and that encreases the sorrows of their doleful Night*; they are covered in the deep pit, and see no way to fly from it, *Job 9. 27, 28.* they are wounded, and carry their wounds with them where they go; they are continually fixing
their

their mournful eyes upon destruction and the Grave, *Job* 7. 7, 8. they have indeed, now and then, some intermissions, but they are like the small breathings and refreshments of a person that is newly taken off the Rack, to be carried to the Rack again. The Tears of these poor deserted people, are not like the Tears of *Mary* in the Garden; for as soon as she began to weep, she beheld the Lord; He quickly came to her help, and changed her Sorrows into Consolations; and his sweet Voice did in a moment run through all the powers of her soul, and made her heart to leap with Joy, and scattered light upon it: But in this case he suffers his Servants to be tost for a long and doleful night, ere he be pleased to speak, and to calm the storms; so that they are as persons straitly besieged, and have no relief at hand; as persons athirst, and have no Water; hungry, and have no Bread. *Psal.* 113. 4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me.*

Tenthly, *This Night of weeping is the more sorrowful, because it is the time of Satan's Cruelty.* When our Spirits are broken with long and painful afflictions, then this Cowardly Spirit sets upon us; he knows that he can easily perplex us, when we are already thrown upon the Ground. When the Sun sets, then the Beasts of the Field creep abroad; When God is departed, then the Devil comes. He comes and torments us with innumerable fears; comes and Triumphs over us, insults, and says, Where is now your God? What think you now of Sin?

What

What is now become of all your Hearing, your Reading, and your many Prayers? You thought to have escaped my Power, and now I have you within my reach; now remember that at such or such a time you sinned, and therefore God has forsaken you; you weep, and your Tears are just; for you are miserable, and are like to be with me for ever. He makes use of our fore Afflictions, to represent God to us as Tyrannical, and as one that will certainly destroy us; and it is our grief, and our misery, that we have so little in our desertions to answer to him. When we really believe that God is departed from us, What can we say? How does this Roaring Lion most cruelly molest us, when our Glory and our Strength is gone! though at other seasons we can oppose his malice, and confidently say, *The Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.* He is, indeed, a knowing and a subtile Spirit; he knows our weakness, sees our trouble, and urges even the very Scriptures and Providences of God upon us to our disadvantage, and that with a marvellous importunity and diligence: He shoots at us with fiery Darts, that are extreamly painful, and comes to shoot them when we are under a sense of God's displeasure; which is like thrusting of a Red Iron into a Wound that is already very sore. It pleases the Devil to hear us groan, and to see us sad; and when we are already pressed down with our Evils, he will be sure to throw upon us more weight; our Groans are his Musick; and when we wallow in Ashes, drown our selves in Tears, and spread

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our Hands for help, and roar till our Throat is dry, he gluts his cruel heart with looking on our woes; it is the pleasantest sight to him, to see God hiding himself from his Child, and that Child broken with fears, torn in pieces with Grievs, made a Brother to Dragons, a Companion to Owls, under restless Anxieties, perpetual Lamentations, feeble, and sore broken, their Tongue cleaving to their Jaws, their Bowels boyling, their Bones burnt with heat, and their flesh consumed *; He sets upon us * *Dr. Gil-* after we have been long troubled, and weary *pin on Sa-* with our March in the doleful Night: And *tans Tem-* which is the sorrow of our sorrows, God may *ptations,* for a long while leave us in his hands; and by *Part 2.* his usage of *Job*, we know what his temper is. *p. 281.* *Luke 22. 31.* 'Tis the hour and the power of darkness.

Eleventhly, *Sometimes this Sorrow is mixed with deep Despair*: It is a Tempestuous and Stormy Night. And as *Paul* said in another case, *All hope of their being saved is taken away.* I shall surely perish, saith the mourning soul; I am damned, I am lost for ever; I am already as in Hell, under unexpressible, insupportable pains, and amazing fears; the Lord will be favourable no more, he hath shut up his Bowels, and his Tender Mercies; he is gone, he is gone from me, and he is for ever gone. No more shall I call him Father; no more shall I behold his shining face; no more shall I hear his kind and loving Voice, he is my Judge and my Enemy, and I am afraid he will be so for ever. He hath cast me off, he hath forsaken me,

me ; he hath condemned me, and I am lost for ever : I am now like to have my poor Soul gathered with Sinners and with Bloody Men ; I am now never like to see that Heaven where I once hoped to go ; I see nothing but ruin, nothing but desolation, nothing but blackness of darkness ; and these unbelieving , despairing Conclusions, produce hard and strange thoughts of God , and an enmity to him in our minds.

Twelfthly, *Looking upon their present troubles as an Introduction to more, and that these are but the beginning of sorrows.* Isa. 38. 13. *I reckoned till morning, that as a Lion so will he break all my bones ; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.* How often do we hear such saying, Oh ! what will become of me, should I dye in such a state as I now am in ! in such horror and amazement ! where will my guilty soul then go ! Alas ! I am no way prepared to give up my accounts, and yet am like every moment to be called away ; If I cannot bear these Pains, and this Wrath, what shall I do to bear an Eternal Hell ! If I tremble so now, what shall I do when the blow is given, and the final Sentence past ! I have but one change to make, and it is like to be a sad and woful change, God knows ! I dare neither live nor dye ! Oh ! what shall I do ! whither shall I go ? Stay I must not, and depart I dare not ; I am now sorely tormented, and must I be for ever and for ever so, and worse too ! I now see that the Gate is strait, and the way is narrow, and that there will be few indeed that will be saved.

The

The shadows of the Evening are stretched out upon me, and what shall I do if it prove an Eternal night? For as it is the glory of Faith, to shew us future things, as if actually present; and to give us joy from them so considered: So it is the torment of despair, to make poor distressed Souls believe they are even as in Hell, whilst they are on Earth; and that they are actually scorched with that wrath that is to come in greater measures.

Thirteenthly, *From all these follow strange discourses and expressions of sorrow*; they are forced to complain, to cry out, and to weep bitterly, *Job 7. 11. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.* They speak without any manner of concern or fear, things that both vex themselves, and make others tremble; they scarce care what they say of God or of themselves. *My soul is weary of my life, I will leave my complaint upon my self; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul, Job 10. 1, 3.* Nay they frequently proceed to wish they had never been born, knowing it is better not to be, than to be miserable. *Job 3. Job 10. 16, 17, 18.* Nay, they may proceed so far, as to wish even to be destroyed that they may know the worst: Such is the sorrow of their hearts, and so violent, *Job 6. 26. Do ye imagine to reprove words, and to reprove the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind!* And there are two things that make their sorrows more sorrowful:

1. As comparing their state with that of others.

2. As

2. As with their own former state.

1. *It makes them more sad when they consider the case of others*; with what peace and joy they live, with what hope and comfort, whilst they are drowned in sorrows. Others, says the *deserted Soul*, can sing the Praises of God with delight, whilst I am overwhelmed, and my Harp is hung upon the Willows; others can go into the solemn Assemblies, and hear his Word, but I am confined in my thick darkness, and dare not go thither; others have the hope of Heaven, and I have the daily fear of Hell; I am like to see others enter into Glory, and my self shut out; Oh! what have my sins done! If I had not greatly sinned, I might have had as much quietness, and comfort, and peace as they; and I that am now cut down for my unfruitfulness, might have been serving God with as much chearfulness, and light, and hope as they do.

2. *When the deserted soul compares its present with its former state.* To a person in misery, it is a great increase of misery to have been once happy: It was to *David* an occasion of new Tears, when he remembered his former Joys, *Psal. 42. 3, 4.* Time was, says the poor Soul, when I thought of God with comfort, and when I thought of him as my own God; and to lose a God that I once enjoyed, is the Loss of all my Losses; and of all my Terrors the most Terrible. Time was, when I could go and pray to him, and ease my self in Prayer; but now I have no boldness, no hope, no success in Prayer, I cannot call him *my Father* any more.

Time

Time was, when I could read the Bible, and treasure up the Promises, and survey the Land of *Canaan* as my own inheritance ; but now I dare not look into the Word, lest I read my own Condemnation there. The Sabbath was formerly to me as one of *the days of Heaven* ; but now it is also, as well as the rest, a sad and a mournful day. I formerly rejoiced in the name of Christ, *I sat under his shadow*, Cant. 8. 10. I was in his eyes as one that found favour ; but now my soul is like the deserts of *Arabia*, I am scorched with burning heat. From how great an height have I fallen ! How fair was I once for Heaven, and for Salvation, and now am like to come short of it ! I was once flourishing in the Courts of the Lord, and now all my Fruit is blasted and withered away ; *his dew laid all night upon my branches* ; but now I am like the Mountains of *Gilboa*, no Rain falls upon me. Had I never heard of Heaven, I could not have been so miserable as I now am ; Had I never known God, the loss of him had not been so terrible as now it is like to be. *Job* 29. 2, 3. *Oh ! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me ; When his Candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness !* These are some of the sorrows that deserted Souls often meet withal ; and indeed, but a small part of what they feel in this dark and stormy night. Before I proceed any further, I will answer two Objections, for I foresee, that against what I have said, some may object.

C H A P. V.

Answering some Objections; and of the further doleful state of a deserted Soul; and whence it is that God is pleased to suffer a very Tempestuous and Stormy Night to come upon his Servants in this World.

Obj. 1. **Y**O U make a great deal of noise and pother about desertions, and God's forsaking of the soul; and it is nothing in the world but Fancy or Imagination, and the whimsies and the fumes of Melancholly.

Ans. It is no new thing for us to hear such Language from Atheistical and Prophane People; from men that are covered with ignorance and sloth: With *ignorance*, because they know not the ways of God and his dispensations; and *sloth*, because they will not search into the Methods of his Government. To grant them for once, that it is Imagination, it is not the less tormenting because it is so; for a Man that strongly imagines himself to be miserable, is truly miserable; if a man think himself unhappy, he is so, whilst that thought remains: But then they would do well, could they but once obtain of themselves leave to consider a little; they would find reason to suspect their own foolish Objections. Who was a Man, as appears by what we read of him, more distressed with the sense of God's Anger, than *David*? yet he

he was of a Musical and a pleasant Temper, of a Ruddy and a Sanguine Constitution. Do they think that such a great Prince as *Job* was, was led meerly by humour and by fancy, when he complains so much of the Arrows of the Almighty? Or, that *Heman*, *Asaph*, and many others, were men of no clear understandings? It is their ignorant Pride that makes them to talk so boldly of the Judgments of God which they do not understand; but if ever their Consciences be awakened with a sense of guilt, they'll find, in what I have now discoursed, something more terrible than Fancy or Imagination.

Obj. 2. *You take a way to discourage men from all Religion.* If it be such a mournful business, it is better to let it alone, and to rejoyce and to be merry, and to take our ease and our pleasure. Go by your selves to Heaven, if you will, we'll joyn our selves to more chearful Companions; we see those that are gay and brisk, that know no sorrow while they live, and that dye in peace: and to their Assembly we will unite our selves. In Answer to this, I desire such to consider, That it is not our Religion that is the Cause of our sorrows; but our wandrings and our deviation from it. If we were always obedient, we should have an Eternal day; our heavenly Father chastises us because we are undutiful; and he does not delight to grieve the Children of Men; and even in these necessary Corrections, he carries on a profitable design for our future and final good. 'Tis true, this

World is a Vale of Tears, this imperfect state that we are in on Earth, is a state of sorrow; but here is the excellency of Religion, it will turn our present night into a brighter day, and all our sorrows into joy; whereas if you slight God, you may have joy a while, and it is but a little while; but remember that your sorrows are to come. Remember, that in this World *Lazarus* had his evil things, and the Rich Man his good things; but after death, *Lazarus* was comforted, and the other tormented. Whether had you rather weep for a night, or weep for ever? Do not bless the wicked in your thoughts, their night is coming, and a far more long and doleful night; God will reckon with you that are now full of joy, for all your vain Mirth, for all your loud Laughters, and your scornful Looks; for all your Censures of Religion, and the Satyrical aspersions that you throw upon it. Now you may say, We'll drink sorrow away; we'll not perplex our minds with sad melancholly thoughts: But will Death never come? Can you go with this jolly temper into the silent Grave? Can you go jesting and laughing to the Bar of the Eternal God? What will come of all your mirth when you appear there? when you must hear your Sentence, and your final Doom? What will come of you, when the Doom is past, and the Judge will not be intreated, and the door is shut? Whither will you go! whither, but to the place where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth? Let no Man be discouraged at Religion for its present sorrows and tribulations; but look beyond

yond this night, unto the coming-day, a day full of light, and full of joy.

But to proceed : 1. *To lose the sense of God's favour, is of all others the most dreadful loss.* In other troubles the resolution and courage of a man will greatly diminish the sense of evil; but in this case nothing of that will avail ; *a wounded spirit who can bear !* God's departure from the soul, is like the departure of the soul from the body; it is painful and very terrible ; only with this difference, that the poor abandon'd body at the same time that it loses life, is incapable of pain; but the deserted soul is not only benighted, but vastly perplexed, and in sore anguish and tribulation. 'Tis, as when after the setting of the Sun, violent tempests and storms arise, which the darkness and horror of the night makes to be more amazing ; in an heart thus forlorn, there is a flaming, tormenting sense of guilt and condemnation ; nothing is more delicate and tender than the soul ; nothing capable of grief more acute than that is ; in other losses there remains something comfortable ; if we lose our friends, we have a God that is unchangeable, and to whom we may repair for consolation; but in this case he himself is apprehended to be gone ; the loss of honour, the smart of diseases, the fury of persecution, the hatred and the rage of men, and death it self, are tolerable things to this ; and tho there is a tenderness in humane nature, by which it must be somewhat sensible of these evils, yet there are abundance of Considerations that will wipe our tears away ; in this mournful night there

is nothing but anguish of Conscience that draws up a process against it self, that presents it self as before the Tribunal of God, without hope of pardon or escape; and the weight of Mountains would not be a load so heavy as this; it is a night wherein we are kept waking with our danger, whether we will or not. Wicked men, tho they have as great a burden, yet are not sensible, they feel not the bitterness of sin; they are like fishes bred in the Sea, that tast not the saltness of the water; they are like swine, that find something agreeable to their meaner appetites, even in that which is most nauseous to other Creatures. When they sin, they feel not the weight of it, for it is their nature to do amiss; their iniquities are like waters, that are not heavy in their own Element; as Intellectual joy is most refin'd, pure and durable; so is the trouble of the mind of all others most troublesome. *Job 6. 2, 3. Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together; for now it would be heavier than the sand of the Sea, therefore my words are swallowed up.*

2. 'Tis attended usually with great pain of body too, and so a man is wounded and distressed in every part. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger, says David. The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poyson whereof drinketh up my spirit, *Job 6. 4.* Sorrow of heart contracts the natural spirits, makes all their motions flow and feeble; and the poor afflicted body does usually decline and wast away; and therefore, saith Heman, *My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.* In this inward distress,

distress, we find our strength decay and melt, even as wax before the fire; for sorrow, that is an ingrateful languor of the soul*, darkneth the spirits, obscures the judgment, blinds the memory, as to all pleasant things, and beclouds the lucid part of the mind; causes the lamp of life to burn weakly: In this troubled condition the person cannot be without a countenance that is pale, and wan, and dejected, like one that is seized with strong fear and consternation; all his motions are sluggish, and no sprightliness nor activity remains. *Prov. 17. 22. A merry heart doth good, like a Medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.* Hence come those frequent complaints in Scripture: *My moisture is turned into the drought of Summer: I am like a bottle in the smoke: my soul cleaveth unto the dust: my face is foul with weeping, and on my eye-lids is the shadow of death, Job 16. 16. Job 30. 17, 18, 19. My bones are pierced in me, in the night season, and my sinews take no rest; by the great force of my disease is my garments changed. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.* Many times indeed the trouble of the soul does begin from the weakness and indisposition of the body. Long affliction, without any prospect of remedy, does in process of time begin to distress the soul it self. *David* was a man often exercised with sickness, and the rage of enemies; and in all the instances almost that we meet with in the *Psalms*, we may observe* that the outward occasions of trouble, brought him under an apprehension of the wrath of God for his sin, *Psal. 6. 1, 2.* and the reason given, *ver. 5, 6.* all his griefs running in-

* Natural History of the Passions, p. 152.

* Dr. Gilpin's Treatise of Temptation, Part 2. p. 296.

to this more terrible thought, That God was his enemy; as little Brooks lose themselves in a great River, and change their name and nature; it most frequently happens, that when our pain is long, and sharp, and helpless, and unavoidable, we begin to question the sincerity of our estate towards God, tho at its first assault we had few doubts or fears about it. Long weakness of body makes the soul more susceptible of trouble, and uneasy thoughts.

I would have more largely insisted on the troubles of a deserted soul, but that I find them so excellently described by Dr. Gilpin in the second part of his *Learned and Experimental Treatise of Satan's Temptations*, and to that I must refer my Reader; as not knowing any other Book that does with so much exactness and truth set forth these inward and Spiritual afflictions. I now proceed to enquire why God suffers such a night, so tempestuous and so frightful, to come upon his servants?

1. *That they may be conformable to Christ.* As they are tempted and distress'd, so was he; as it is with their souls a season of darkness, so was it also with his holy soul, that was full of amazement under a sense of God's wrath; tho he never despaired indeed, as many of his servants are apt to do under the violence of sorrow, *Isa. 53. 3. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:* When he was so saddened for our sakes, 'tis reasonable to think that we should sometimes taste of the bitter cup; and not always rejoyce and be at ease. If God spared not his only Son, why should we expect to feel no-
thing

thing but what is very mild and gentle? And our Lord has told us, *The world shall rejoyce, but you shall be sorrowful*, Joh. 16. from v. 20. to v. 22. The sufferings of Christ were to give a satisfaction to the Divine Justice; ours are not to be lookt upon with such an eye; by these terrors and desertions we learn to value and esteem the love of Christ, who was pleased to redeem us when it cost him so very dear, and who was pleased not to decline the field of Battel, tho it was not to be managed without vast labour, and a mighty pain. And says the Apostle, *Rejoyce, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings*, 1 Pet. 4. 13.

Secondly, *Another reason may be, Because our fall and our ruin came by pleasure.* A delight it was, tho a very short one, that made our forefather *Adam* Apostatize; and it is equitable that we should be cured by something contrary to that which occasioned our disease, seeing our joys are dangerous; he makes our grief and sorrows to be healthful and Medicinal.

Thirdly, *'Tis a very proper season wherein to be sorrowful.* Among all the other excellent appointments of Providence, this is one, That there should be a time to weep, *Eccles. 3. 4.* There is in this weeping-night nothing strange or uncouth; all our fathers have in some respect passed under a Cloud, and a Cloud that has dissolved in rain, and which has given to the good Pilgrims much trouble as they went along. 1 Pet. 2. 6. *Now for a season ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* 'Tis no more strange to see mourning in the Church on Earth, than

to see storms or snow in Winter ; every thing is beautiful in its season; and so this affliction is. The night is useful to the world, tho not so pleasant as the day ; our sickly state will not admit us to have nothing but what is grateful to our pallats ; the wise God therefore, many times, instead of very pleasant things, confers the best upon us ; we must allow the Great Master of the Family to maintain its order, prosperity, and welfare by his own methods ; to chastise us when, and how, and as long as he pleaseth ; for his strokes, tho very smart, yet are still very just ; and it is in order to some better thing that he designs for us, that at the present we are made to grieve ; for grief, as one observes * is an imperfect passion, not made for it self, but for some higher use ; as also, all the rest of the declining affections are ; as Hatred for Love, Fear for Confidence, and the like ; and so Sorrow for Joy, unto which it is subservient ; as launcing and searing are not for themselves, but for ease and remedy ; and a bitter potion is not for sickness, which it may cause for a time, but for health ; so Sorrow is made for Joy, and Joy is the end of Sorrow ; and God, we may be sure, will have his end.

* Dr. Harris's Serm.
p. 277.

IV. *To shew his own Sovereignty both in afflicting and comforting.* He causes such a Prince as *Job* to sit upon a Dunghill, in anguish and trouble, whilst another sits in unclouded Glory on the Throne. He pulls down one, and sets up another ; and does whatsoever he will in Heaven or Earth ; 'tis the withdrawing of his Spirit that

that is an occasion of mourning to the soul; and he variously acts upon it; for tho he deny not what is absolutely necessary to the being of the Christian; yet he many times does not vouchsafe to give what would make it very comfortable; he upon wise Reasons does many times suffer the hearts of his people to be overwhelmed with sorrow, when he could make them brim-full of joy; as in nature he lets the Earth gape for thirst, when he could immediately refresh it with seasonable showers. Who in all this mysterious variety of his Administrations, can say unto him, What dost thou? Some Countries are desert, barren and forsaken, burnt up with scorching heat, and fill'd with Beasts of Prey; and others are inhabited and fruitful, and greatly blessed, and he sees fit to have the parts of his Dominions thus qualified. Some does he draw with *the sweet savour of his Ointments*; they perceive nothing but what is grateful and refreshing; but others he sorely terrifies with the greatness of his Power, his Holiness and Majesty; and they never eat, nor live with pleasure. The Captain of our Salvation causes some of his Soldiers to meet with much more formidable dangers than others do; they have more sweat, and fatigue, and toil, and painful duty, tho he will be sure himself to help them when they are ready to give way; the manner of his dispensations to his servants is various, both in life, and at death. Some are *chastned all the day long, and with sore pain upon their beds too*, whilst others have no pain at all; some go drooping to the Grave, bowed down with his dis-

displeasure, whilst his favour and his gracious eye makes others to go smiling thither. *Enoch* and *Elias* had a pleasant Removal from the world; very short, and very glorious was their passage hence; but the most part of men groan a long while before they are called away; and then he does it to shew his own *Power*, that when the wound appears to be desperate, he can give a cure with a word. When the night is fullest of horror, he can bring the reviving day. When the storms are highest, he need but say to the waves, to our doubts, and our fears, *Be still*, and immediately there is a calm: What is not a God, and so great and so good a God able to do! He that produced from a meer Chaos, this beautiful and pleasant World, need only say to us in the middle of our doleful darkness, *Let there be light*, and it shall be so. *Job* 5. 18. *He maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole*; in acknowledgment of this Sovereign Ability it is that *David* prays, *Psal.* 51. 8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* Why so? had not *Nathan* told him, That his sin was pardoned? Yes; but all the testimonies of men are nothing without the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. God has committed to men the administration of his Word, but reserves the Spirit to himself; that Spirit which gives consolation to our hearts, and peace to our Consciences. When *Mary* and *Martha* were in sorrow for their Brother's death, 'tis said, *Job.* 11. 19. *Many of the Jews came from Jerusalem to comfort them*; but they received no comfort till Christ himself came thither.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

Shewing whence it is, that Melancholly and Troubled People love Solitariness; and whence it is, that serious Persons are not so light and frothy in their Conversations, as others are. With some other Inferences deducible from the foregoing Doctrine. With some Advices to those that have never been deserted, and to such as are complaining that they are so.

Inf. 1. **H**ence you see the Reason why People in trouble love Solitariness. They are full of Sorrow; and Sorrow, if it have taken deep root, is naturally reserved, and flies all Conversation. Grief is a thing that is very silent and private. Those People that are very Talkative and Clamorous in their Sorrows, are never very sorrowful. Some are apt to wonder, why Melancholly People delight to be so much alone; and I'll tell them the reason of it: 1. Because the disorder'd Humours of their Bodies alter their Temper, their Humours, and their Inclinations, that they are no more the same that they use to be; their very Distemper is adverse to what is joyous and diverting; and they that wonder at them, may as wisely wonder why they will be diseased, which they would not be, if they knew how to help it; but the
Disease

Disease of Melancholly is so obstinate, and so unknown to all but those that have it, that nothing but the Power of God can totally overthrow it; and I know no other cure for it.

2. *Another Reason why they chuse to be alone*, is, Because People do not generally mind what they say, nor believe them, but rather deride them, which they do not use so cruelly to do with those that are in other Distempers; and no Man is to be blamed for avoiding Society, when they do not afford the common Credit to his Words that is due to the rest of Men. But

3. *Another, and the principal Reason why People in Trouble and Sadness chuse to be alone*, is, Because they generally apprehend themselves singled out to be the Marks of God's peculiar Displeasure; and they are often by their sharp Afflictions a terror to themselves, and a wonder to others. It even breaks their hearts to see how low they are fallen, how oppressed, that were once as easy, as pleasant, as full of hope as others are. Job 6. 21. *Ye see my casting down, and are afraid.* Psalm 73. 7. *I am as a wonder unto many.* And it is usually unpleasant to others to be with them. Psalm 88. 18. *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me: and mine acquaintance into darkness.* And tho it was not so with the Friends of Job, to see a Man whom they had once known Happy, to be so Miserable; one whom they had seen so very Prosperous, to be so very Poor, in such sorry, forlorn Circumstances, did greatly affect them; he, poor Man, was changed, they knew him not, Job 2. 12, 13. *And when they lift up their eyes afar off, and*
knew

knew him not, they lift up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great. As the Prophet represents one under spiritual and great Afflictions, that he sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, Lam. 3. 28.

Inf. 2. Hence we see the Reason why the Servants of God have not such light and frothy spirits as others. They do not indeed always mourn, but even when they rejoice, 'tis with a serious and solid Joy. Their own Sins, and the fear they have of sinning, and the concern they have for the Sins of others, cause them to walk softly. The many Miseries to which they are obnoxious, and the many that they see the Church of God groaning under, keep them from innumerable Follies, from many Lightnesses and Vanities in Conversation, which others do not scruple; tho frequently when their Countenances are grave, their Hearts are full of the most lively joys.

Inf. 3. What a mean sorry thing a Christian is many times in this World, as to his outward appearance. A Mourner never makes so great a shew as one in Triumph does. His Graces, and his Excellencies are many times like the Ground in Winter, covered with Rain and Storm, which make him not to be much regarded; because Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, therefore

fore the Jews saw no beauty or comeliness in him, that they should desire him; they hid their faces from him, because he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, *Isaiah 53. 3, 4.* The life of all Believers is hid with God in Christ, *Col. 3. 3.* 'Tis maintained with suitable nourishment, formed by the Gospel, and preserved by the Spirit; but because of innumerable Temptations and Weaknesses, the Glory of their Grace is very much eclipsed; 'tis hidden under a thousand Crosses and Infirmities, and does not yet appear in the clearest Light. A Christian in this World is like a King, that Travels *Incognito* in a strange Land; he is courfly treated by Men that do not know the greatness of his Birth and Quality; he Travels but in the habit of a Pilgrim, and cloathed with Heaviness, and hath Tears for his Meat and Drink. Or he is as the Sun ascending to his Meridian, but obscured from our sight with many thick and watry Clouds. *Job 26. 27, 28. When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me. I went mourning without the Sun: I stood up, and cried in the congregation.* Now the Servants of God are going to the Port of Blessedness, as *Jonas* to the Shore covered with the Waters of Affliction. They seem now to a careless Eye, like the Seed that is buried in the Ground, to be quite cast away; but they shall arise with new Lustre.

Inf. 4. This assures us, that there is another, and a more happy Life after this. Blessed are they that
mourn,

mourn, for they shall be comforted, Matth. 5. 4. He that goeth forth weeping, &c. Psalm 126. 6. John 16. 16. This Sorrow is the forerunner of abiding Joy; these Tears of holy Persons are fruitful and profitable Tears; and those Souls that now are vext with the Sins of others, and their own, shall ere long be sweetly refreshed; the Night is long and doleful, but the Morning comes that will cause them to forget all their former trouble. God puts their Tears into his Bottles, tho in appearance they fall upon the Earth unregarded, and seem to be lost, even then they fall into the Lap of his Providence, which will make them to fructify by his Blessing, and to their eternal Joy. This little Grain that is sown, will return back again into their bosoms with measure filled up, and running over; and their floods of Tears that now surrounded them, shall be turned into Rivers of Pleasure for evermore. If in this life only we had hope, we were of all men most miserable, 1 Cor. 15. 19. Miserable indeed, if we were obliged to bear so many Crosses, to meet so many Dangers, and such various Calamities, and to have no reward; but thanks be to God, this is not our case. Whilest we look upon this World, upon the manifold Evils that are here, we weep; but when we lift up our Eyes to that pure, and calm, and blessed World that is above, we may be chearful and rejoyce; here we are tost among Rocks and Shelves, with threatening Waves, and high Winds; but there we behold our rest. In this Wilderness we are pursued with*

* Charles
Recueil. de
Sermons,
p. 119.

with the roaring Lyons, annoyed with Hunger, and with Thirst, and other Inconveniencies; but we are all the while in our Journey to the promised Land, and shortly shall be there, and then we shall receive a blessed period of all our Conflicts, and our Difficulties.

Inf. 5. Seeing there is such a weeping Night to the Servants of God, this verifies and confirms that Maxim of the Gospel, That strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life. Thither must we go through the very depths, and wade through many Seas of grief, though all others find it to be difficult, because of the frequent self-denials and mortifications to which they are obliged; because of the many sins that beset them, and the many sufferings they must undergo; yet deserted Souls find it to be a strait way indeed, and to them it is covered with Thorns and Bryars; and though you, whose Mountain is yet strong, whose hopes are yet unshaken, think it easie; yet if ever you come to be sorely tempted, to be afflicted with long and sharp Tryals; if you come to be greatly pained in your Bodies, and greatly troubled in your Souls; if you be awakened with the sight of Hell, and the threatnings of the Law, and broken with the terrors of the Almighty; you will joyn your cry to ours, and say, That the way is very strait: Job, and Heman, and Asaph, and David, and all others have found it to be so. There is indeed a Lion in the way, but that must not be an excuse to sloth, but a motive to our Courage; we must take the more caution,
and

and be more watchful to avoid him. The sense to God's displeasure, is as an hot Furnace, into which many of his Children are thrown, though they shall come out unhurt; and when they are come forth, they shall be like Gold: yet it is grievous to Sense, when they must be saved so as by Fire; when they must come to their Crown by Racks and Torments, by Anguish and Tribulation; and to Heaven by the very Gates of Hell.

I shall close this Chapter with two Exhortations: 1. *With respect to those with whom it is yet day, and who have never been forsaken of God.* And 2. *To such disconsolate souls, with whom it is as yet a weeping and a mourning Night.*

1. *If you have not been forsaken, and have ever had the light of God's Countenance shining on you, beware of the approach of Night: Prevent as much as you can the declining of the Day.* I have shewed you into what a Pit I and some others have fallen; take warning by our danger, and take heed lest you also come into the like doleful Case. You have the smiles of your Heavenly Father, you have been ever with him; Oh! do not provoke him to turn those reviving smiles into killing frowns; be not secure, be not self-confident, be not faithless, but believe and guard your Faith, and be watchful; for your Enemy, the Devil, goes about seeking whom he may devour. Work while it is day, for when this night comes, I can assure you by sad experience, that you cannot work. Pray now with fervour, for then you cannot Pray; Now Read, and

and Hear the Word of God, for then you will find no taste even in the Bread of Life. Beware of Indifference and of Lukewarmness; beware of grieving the Spirit, and of slighting his motions; for all these are the shadows of this doleful night. Your day is comfortable, and your journey pleasant, while the Sun shines; Oh! make hast to your Eternal home, lest your feet stumble on the dark Mountains: If you linger, wrath will overtake you, terrible and amazing wrath, such as you cannot now believe, and such as you then cannot bear. Credit the Report that we bring you from the Land of darkness, and go not in the way that will lead you thither; We have fallen among Thieves and Robbers, among Temptations, and Dangers, and Tryals, that deprived us of all our Comforts; do not you tread a path where you will surely be set upon, and greatly wounded, if you do escape; though it may be you say, as *Job 29. 18. I shall dye in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand.*

2. Do not severely judge or censure persons under spiritual trouble; It is night with them indeed, but they may live to see the morning come. God has overthrown them, but he will build them up again; they are in darkness, but rejoice not over them, for he will be a light unto them. Speak not to the hurt of those that he has wounded; look not on with unconcernedness, or a secret pleasure, in the time of your Brother's trouble; *Job 30. 11. Because he hath loosed my cord and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.* Do not censure these
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Mysterious Dispensations of God and of his Providence; stay till you see the beautiful structure that he will cause to rise from these Ruins; When they are tempted by the Devil, do not you with *Job's* Friends play the Devils to, and insult over them, or encrease their misery: It was a very great sin in those good men, to aggravate his trouble by their rash discourses, and their sinister interpretations of it. God himself decided the case for his Servant, and told them, that they had not spoken of him the things that were right. Be not hasty to judge of persons who are weeping, nay, even despairing for their sins; They are in bitterness, but such as God may speedily remove; He may change their Wilderness into a Paradise; He will perfect his Power in their Weakness, turn their Evils into Good, and their Darknes into a marvellous Light; and stay till you see the end of the Lord. He has taken their Comforts from them to improve them, and to restore them to them upon better terms; He has removed their Pots of Water, but will, it may be, send them back full of Wine: For (as one observes) God is wont to bring most of his greatest ends about, by seeming to look quite another way from what he hath a special purpose to bring to pass; He seldom proceeds in a direct way to his Ends; or in such a way as the Creature would think stood most with Reason to take; but when his business lies in the East, he takes his Journey, as it were, full West; and when he has a mind to build, he batters down; when his design is for Light, his method and his way

is through the greatest darkness. Let *the Great Instance of Job*, for ever repress our bold Censures of afflicted and miserable people; Who would have thought that a Man so distressed, should ever have been delivered! That one that had so many pains, should be cured! one so poor, so derided, so scorned by Drunkards, and Boys, and the meanest of the people, should be honoured and esteemed again! And yet all this happened to him, *his latter end was better than his beginning*; he lived to see the Funeral of his Griets, and the Resurrection of his Comforts; the Lord that had afflicted him, took off his heavy hand, and turned again his Captivity; He re-established him in all his former splendor, and made him, for his short darkness, to shine with a double glory, and *gave him twice as much as he had before*; and for a year or two of trouble, gave him many pleasant long years of Joy, till he *was old and full of days*; till he was satisfied with living, and calmly desired to dye. And the scope of the Book of *Job* is (as *Dr. Patrick* quotes it from *Maimonides*) to establish the great Article of Providence, and thereby to preserve us from Error, in thinking that God's Knowledge is like our Knowledge; or his Intention, Providence and Government, like our Intention, Providence and Government; which foundation being laid, nothing will seem hard to a Man, whatsoever happens; nor will he fall into dubious thoughts concerning God, whether he knows what is befallen us or no, and whether he takes any care of us; but rather he will be inflamed the more vehemently in the

Love

Love of God, as is said in the end of this Prophecy, *Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* So say our Wise men, They that act out of Love, will rejoyce in Chastisements; see *James 5. 11.*

As to you with whom it is yet night, I shall only add this, Though I am my self come as to the quiet shore, yet I sympathize with you that are yet labouring in the deep: You are *afflicted and tost with tempests*; but as in *Isa. 54. from 9. to 11.* *The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with Saphirs.* I know you think it is a long night, and so it is, but it is not Eternal, the day will break, and the shadows flee away; your wise Physician is preparing Cordials for your Hearts, and Balsom for your Wounds. Let him have your desires, to him address your Prayers, with your weaker Arms be still reaching after him; you are scorched with wrath, but he will be a refreshment to your heat; you are in darkness, but he is the Sun of Righteousness, that will chase all the Clouds away: Fly to this *City of Refuge*, pant for this *Fountain of Living Waters*; and while you are condemned in your own thoughts, look to this Advocate and Mediator, and he will plead your Cause; the wrath that burns you, may be hot as Hell, but his Blood will extinguish the tormenting flame; the Devil may be

too strong for you, beg therefore help of this Jesus who has overcome him, and who will teach you to get the victory. He takes pleasure in helping such as have no helper; and when there is none to deliver you, his own Arm will bring Salvation: *He hath born our grief, and with his stripes we are healed.* And trusting in his satisfaction, you may freely implore the Mercy of his Father, nay, even appeal to his Justice; for he will not have two payments for the same debt. You may say, Thou hast promised to pardon sin for the sake of thy well-beloved Son; Let it be unto me according to thy word. You may in vain complain of your troubles to those that have never felt the like; they may grieve you more by their harsh expressions; but remember, that when you go to Christ for help, you go to one that is experienced, to one that has tasted of the same bitter Cup; to one that was himself forsaken of God for a season, and knows how sad it is with you in the like Case: And *those that come to him, he will in no wise cast out.*

C H A P. VII.

Of the great joy that fills a Soul, when the favour of God returns to it, after having been long in darkness; And the joy is great in several respects, As it was unexpected; As it discovers God to be reconciled, and gives the mourner a possession of Christ by faith, through the influence of the Holy Spirit; It revives his Graces, delivers him from the insulting of the Devil; shews the soul its interest in the Promises.

Joy cometh in the morning, Psal. 30. 5. Having in several Chapters, shewed what a mournful night it is to a deserted soul, when God is withdrawn, and what passes then; it is now time to hasten to what is more pleasant and reviving, according to the order of Divine Providence, which appointeth that where there has been weeping in the night, in the morning there should be joy: Hence we may observe, *The return of Gods favour to a soul is matter of great joy to it; or these words may denote the promptitude and readiness of Divine Consolations.*

Three things are the usual occasions of joy, all which are in this case: 1. *The remembrance of some danger that we have lately escaped.* 2. *The*

possession of a present good. 3. The solid expectation of some future happiness.

First, *The remembrance of a past danger, does occasion a more lively sense of joy.* As past joys renew our grief, and make our sorrows more sorrowful; so the griefs that are past, give us a sweeter and a better taste of joy; after long sickness and acute pain, 'tis very pleasant to be at ease; 'tis pleasant to rest when we have been tired all the day with hard labour; the Laurels of a Soldier flourish with a purer Green when they have been obtained with a mighty difficulty; the danger of the Combat brightens the glory of the succeeding Triumph. 'Tis grateful to the Mariner to stand upon the firm Land, and from thence to behold the waves in which he had like to have been thrown away; one that has been long in chains, rejoices to find himself at liberty; 'tis pleasant after a man has been long athirst, to be refresh'd with the fountain of Living waters; it renders the joy more accomplished, and more satisfying, when refreshment comes after long and grievous miseries: After long despair, the least beam of hope is more reviving; a man that has lost his way all night, has cause to rejoice at the sight of day. As to persons newly converted, their faith is full of joy when they compare their former danger, and their present safety, their former darkness and the shining light that guides their paths; so to souls that have been in great anguish and tribulation for sin, that have apprehended themselves to be cast out of the presence of the Lord, 'tis very pleasant to behold
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his face again ; 'tis pleasant to such as by reason of their sore affliction have been Companions to Owls and Dragons, to come into Religious Assemblies, and instead of solitary groans and tears, to join with the multitudes of those that keep Holiday ; the soul is then like that of the Returning Prodigal, finds it self in the Arms and Embraces of a Loving Father, and well treated, when it looked, as it might justly, for rebukes and wrath. Thunder and Lightning, and Storms, make the calm and pleasant weather more grateful to us ; 'tis pleasant after long absence, to meet our friend again ; we find a joy sparkling in our eyes and in our breasts, at the sight of them whom we have not seen for many sad and doleful years ; whom yet we longed to see ; and that which heightens our pleasure is, when a blessing arrives to us that was *unexpected* ; that mercy does fill us with the biggest joy which is extremely suitable to us, and which yet we hoped not to receive. The Crown sat the easier upon *David's* head, after he had so often thought that he should have fallen by the hands of *Saul*. As life tastes with a better relish when there has been but one step between us and death. With what Transports doth a kind mother see her Son coming home whom she gave for lost and dead ! What a chearful Interview was that which *Jacob* had with his Son after he had so often thought that he had been torn to pieces ! as soon as he came near, he fell upon his neck, and there the revived soul of the poor old man was ready even with excess of pleasure to melt away ; he never thought to have seen

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his *Joseph*, his dear *Joseph* any more ; he was even with sorrow for his apprehended death, going down to the Grave ; and the news of his Son's welfare made him to be young, and live again ; for at the hearing of it, the spirit of *Jacob* revived, and *Israel* said, *It is enough, Joseph my Son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die*, Gen. 45.28. And so the *Jews* having liberty to return from *Babylon*, were so surprized with the favour of their sudden deliverance, and the greatness of the mercy, that they could hardly think it true, it seem'd to be the meer effect of Imagination, which during the Interruption of our usual thoughts, by sleep put several deceits upon us, *Psal.* 126. 1, 2. *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed.* They were delivered in a manner illustrious and surprizing, and it is thus exprest for three Reasons: 1. A man does not foresee what he dreams of ; a man that is apt to be cherish'd with sound and refreshing sleep, does not know whether he shall dream or not. So this deliverance arriv'd to them when they thought not of it. 2. As it arriv'd without any pain to them that were delivered ; as when we dream we are in repose, and are at no trouble ; and this heightens the glory of a deliverance, and the love of the deliverer when the person delivered takes no care about it. 3. This deliverance was above all that they could hope for ; as if a man dreamed of something like it, but which he saw not when he was awake, for such are the *Chymera's* which the Imagination then forms, and which fall not under the notice of

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our senses ; such a thing was never heard or * *Monfieur. Charles in loc.*
seen before *.

The return of comfort to a Soul that was even expiring in grief and sadness , is like the raising of *Lazarus* to his mourning Sisters ; they thought that if the Lord had been there, he had not died ; but they did not in the least think that he should be raised again. The review of our former miseries does encrease the sense of present happiness ; the light which the Grace of the Gospel brought into the world, and that dissipated the obscurities that compassed it about, made the Apostles full of admiration, and of wonder ; when they thought of their former ignorance and error , and the light and knowledg that God had given them , ever are they wondring at the Riches of his Grace, that instead of the corruption in which they were plunged , gave them Sanctification, Joy and Hope : What a surprize was it to the poor Shepherds that were in the field, watching their flock by night , *Luk. 2. 9.* to see an Angel and the Glory of the Lord shining round about them ! To see such a Glory when they thought of nothing less , nor did expect so great a Grace * ; but 'tis usual with God to bestow the most eminent favours when men do not look for them ; as Christ came to seek Sinners when they thought not of him, and when their minds were filled with other objects , *they were afraid* ; for great objects , when they present themselves suddenly to us, usually give us much astonishment ; for our spirit on these occasions has not the liberty to use its forces, and they are

* *Claude
Traité de
la Composition d'un
Sermon.
p. 267.*

are most frequently dissipated, and that dissipation causes fear; when a soul has long had in it self the sentence of condemnation, a pardon from God is very comfortable; our former darkness does encrease our present comfort, as shadows set off the light.

2. *Joy arises from the possession of a present good:* Thus is the presence of God unspeakably sweet to a soul from which he was once departed:

1. *As it now thinks upon him as reconciled:* 2. *As it has by faith possession of Christ,* by whom his favour is restored; as our sadness came by unbelief, so does our joy by faith. When it was in anguish, every thought of God was terrible and amazing, but now nothing is so refreshing, so desirable, so satisfying, as to think of him. *Psal. 94. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* Now the poor sinner does not look upon him as an enemy, but as a Father; sees no more in his hand a flaming Sword, but a Scepter of Grace; hears no more his angry voice, but his gentle comfortable Calls and Invitations; according to that in *Isa. 66. 13. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted; and when ye see this, your heart shall rejoyce, and your bones shall flourish like an herb.* Oh what a joy is it to the soul to find God with it! to behold the wonders of his pardoning mercy! to see that all its unbelief, all its impatience, all its murmurings in its wilderness-condition, shall not finally obstruct its Journey to the Land of Promise; to be pardoned, when they thought them-

themselves actually dying in their guilt, does aggravate the mercy of escape. 'Tis true, God loves his people even when he is angry with them; he designs their good by the sharpest and severest strokes; and when he withdraws, 'tis that they may give a better welcome to him at his return; when our lower Region is most cloudy, the Sun is still full of light; but it is pleasant to us to see the clouds vanish, and the sky clear, and to be refreshed with his invivifying beams again. God indeed is the same for ever; our distresses, our fears, and our troubles, do not alter his kindness; these several variations in us, make no change in him; no more than the several alterations in the air, infer a diversity in the Sun, which is one and the same it self, tho the changes be multiplied here below; but yet even Paternal wrath is wrath still, and his Love is what we ought earnestly to desire, and at the manifestation of which we should greatly rejoyce. It was once the saying of Mr. Peacock under great distress of Conscience, *Oh God reconcile me to thee, that I may tast one dram of thy Grace, by which my miserable soul may receive comfort!* Such was his longing after him; and afterwards when the storm began to cease, being put in mind of God's mercy to him, he said, *Oh the Sea is not so full of water, nor the Sun of light, as God is of Goodness; his Mercy is ten thousand times more!* The good man long'd but for a drop before, and he had given him full draughts of Consolation; so far are the ways of God above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts; in our sore trials

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we think of God as a frowning Judge, but when we are deliver'd, we see him to be our best friend; that he is really kind to us, of whom we were so much afraid; who can express the joy of having him at peace with us! There is a Heaven in the smiles of a Reconciled God. Figure to your selves, as one expresses it*, a person that is condemned to death for his Crimes, and who at the same time that he prepares to undergo it, sees an Herald from the King bringing his pardon in his hand, and stops the Execution, by crying, Mercy, mercy, to the miserable man! with what transports of joy does the poor Malefactor see this Messenger, and hear these tidings! such and so pleasant is the joy, that a deserted Christian finds after he heard the sentence of ruin, and saw it near, when the Law condemned him, and his Conscience ecchoed to the voice of the Law, to find that he is absolved, that the Sentence is reversed, and the sins that made him afraid, are blotted out, then it is that the mourning soul dares to look up to God, as being no more at war with him, nor afraid of the Thunder of his Power; then it is refresh'd with his sweet and amiable Attributes, and then the disorders and the pangs that it felt within, are vanish'd, and all is quiet; then it dwells not as in the shadow of death, nor as on the borders of eternal grief.

* *De Lang-*
Treize Ser-
mons, pag,
850.

Secondly, *As the deserted soul does by faith obtain a possession of Christ,* so it is full of joy; and Christ is both the Object and the Author of it; he

he has purchas'd it by his own blood, and has born our griefs, that we might not mourn for ever ; the having of him is a constant inexhaustible source of joy to the believer, to be possessed of this Saviour, who is the *brightness of the glory, and the express Image of the Father*. His Word, his Wisdom, his Love, and his Goodwill, the Treasury of his Graces, in whom his Fulness dwells ; this Divine Saviour is our Light that chases away the darkness of our night, and who with his Gracious hand dries our eyes ; this is that Glorious Sun that arises with healing on his wings ; that not only cheers our hearts, but cures our wounds, dispells the night, and makes the voice of sighing to expire at the first dawning of the day ; this is the Tree of Life, the Coelestial Manna, that gives us Immortality *. This is our *David* that defeats our Enemies ; our *Solomon* that establishes among us a sweet and inviolable peace ; he expiates our Crimes, and gives our minds rest ; he saves us from the wrath to come ; he delivers us from our sins, from Hell, from our slavish fears, and causes us at length in our darkest and most tempestuous nights to hear his Voice, saying, *It is I, be not afraid*. We are first sadned by unbelief, and faith doth first revive us ; and this faith is attended with joy and peace ; when the poor deserted soul begins to apprehend its Interest in Christ, how are all its apprehensions changed, saying, Heretofore in my terrible anguish I thought that he was my certain enemy, that I had no portion in his Blood, nor any share in his Intercession : That

* See *Dail-*
le on Phil.
IV. v. IV.

as I was under unbelief, so I should be vastly more miserable than those that never heard of him, than Heathens and Pagans, and all the rest of men to whom the Gospel never came; I then thought and was fully perswaded, that I should not hear of him with comfort any more; I then thought that I should see him coming in the Clouds to my terror; that I should be placed at his left hand; and from thence be commanded to depart, and now he is come in a way of mercy and of love: He has pleaded for me, when I had nothing to say for my self; and his Word has calmed the storms that made me so much afraid. He cast an eye of Love upon me, when I expected nothing but his frowns; now can I go and pray in his Encouraging Name; and now I have hope when I pray; his Satisfaction and his Intercession are both the constant fountains of my joy.

3. *This joy that comes after a night of sad and mournful desertion, is the work of the blessed Spirit; who is stiled by way of Eminency, the Comforter: and Peace is one of the fruits of the Spirit; he causes us to close with Christ, and to embrace the Promises: He assists our weakness, and teaches us to pray: He convinces us of sin, and lays us low, that he may raise us up again: He humbles, and purifies, and fits our hearts for lasting and abiding joys; this joy is not the product of a natural temper, but a disposition that hath its Original from Heaven, and leads us thither; it is not the pleasant motion of our natural spirits, to which it owes its birth, but as our*
grief

grief was in our souls, so the joy is in the same :
 our Consciences were disquieted, so it is in
 him that he works a stillness and repose.

4. *This Joy revives our Graces* : In this mourn-
 ful Night we were quite blasted with the vio-
 lence and fury of the storm : We were like the
 Ground in Winter, destitute and forlorn, and no
 fruit appeared : but the manifestation of God's
 favour is to us as the return of Spring, Cant. 2.
 11. *For lo the Winter is past, the Rain is over and
 gone, the flowers appear on the Earth, the time of the
 singing of Birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle
 is heard in our Land. The Fig-tree putteth forth her
 green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grape give
 a good smell.* That solitary season is now gone,
 wherein nothing but doubts and fears, and de-
 spondence, and accusations, did overwhelm the
 soul; the floods that kept it under, are dried,
 and there is now a cheerful and a pleasant alte-
 ration : the Clouds are vanished, and the Sky is
 bright : and a new World and face of things
 does now appear : His return to his Ancient
 Mercies is like Noah's entrance into the World
 after it had been cleansed and washed by the
 Deluge. God's Favour makes our Tears to be as
 the gentle dew of Night, which with the warm-
 ing kindly beams of the Sun, makes the Plants
 and Herbs, the Gardens and the Flowers, to
 look more fresh and green. When God departs,
 our weakness to what is good encreases; we have
 no power left, but the joy of the Lord is our
 strength, Neh. 8. 10. This is like the return of
 health, and good digestion, to one that has been

long sick ; it causes a new ferment and motion in the blood, and makes all his actions to be accompanied with more life and vigor ; men under strange fears and amazement are incapable of service ; and when we are deserted, so are we. When we apprehend our selves to be cast-aways, we offer *the bread of mourners*, if we offer at all ; but none of our Sacrifices are with joy and gladness of heart. A man whose bones are broken, cannot go about his work ; and when our spirits are wounded, if we work at all, we do but lamely set about it. We may halt a little, but we cannot *run the way of God's Commands*. Our sorrows make us serious, and thoughtful, but 'tis joy that makes us active ; 'tis the oyl of gladness that causes our wheels to move, and us to advance forward, as in the Chariots of *Amiradab*. One that is hungry or a thirst, uses but feeble endeavours, to what he does that is newly refreshed.

5. *This joy that comes in the Morning, after a Night of weeping, is very pleasant to the Soul, as it is then delivered from the insultings and triumphs of the Devil* : In that doleful Night, that evil spirit does continually terrifie and fright us ; but when the morning comes, he that dreads the light flies away. Then it is in some measure with us, as it was with our Saviour in the Wilderness, *When the Devil left him, Angels came and ministred unto him*. Tho there is between him and us a vast disparity ; he conquered and was no way worsted by it ; but we come bleeding from the field of Battel ; our souls are defiled with

with his Temptations; and the hurts we receive in our Conflicts, do now and then pain us; and yield us remembrances of our sin by their pain and smart, it may be, to our dying day: But however, it is a joy to us, to think that tho we were beset on every side, yet we are escaped as a Bird out of the snare of the Fowler; *The snare is broken, and we are escaped, Psal. 124. 7.* God has brought our souls out of the deep Dungeon, and he that was our Gaoler had not power enough to keep us there; tho the deliverance that we have had, is so strange, and so miraculous, that our going out is like that of Peter, *Act. 12. 9. He went out, and wist not that it was true which was done by the Angel, but thought he saw a Vision.* It was wonderful to Peter that had looked for a sudden Execution on the next day, to come to his praying-friends in safety; and so it is to us, who thought our selves a while ago doom'd to die. The Devil hath winnow'd us; and, Oh that we could say, That our chaff is gone! This Archer hath sorely shot at us, but thanks be to God, he hath not obtained his design, which was our total ruin. We have been in a very fiery furnace. Oh that it were with us as with the three Children that came out, and were not hurt at all. We have been in a den of Lions, in a howling Wilderness, but we have not perisht there; it is a pleasure to us that we have now something to answer the great accuser of the Brethren; that now we can by faith in our great Captain, ward off his blows, and quench his fiery darts.

6. *This joy that comes in the morning after desertion, is from the propriety that we have in God, and in the Promises of the Gospel; as David says, Psal. 42. ult. He is the health of my countenance, and my God. 'Tis pleasant to know that God is good; but more pleasant to us when we taste his Goodness: When we can say with the Blessed Virgin, Luk. 1. 46, 47. My soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour, for he hath regarded the low estate of his hand-maiden. 'Tis pleasant to hear of Christ, but more pleasant by far, when we with old Simeon embrace him in our Arms; and say with the Church, I am my beloved's, and he is mine. Then the soul will be cheared with perpetual delight, saying, Having God, I have enough: Enter into thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. When it can reflect and think of him as its own portion, then the sorrows and darkness of the Night are gone; for it has God, that is all light, and with him is no darkness at all; and to see the light, and to possess it, is the same thing. There is, as one observes, a reflected and a direct Light, I see Palaces, and Mountains, and Towns, and Fields, and Trees, with a reflected Light; and hence it is, that I see them without possessing them; but I see the light of the Sun, and of the Stars, by direct rays, and in seeing them I possess; for to rejoice in the light of the Sun, and to possess it, is the same thing. We now see God indeed by a reflected light, which comes to us from the Creatures; and hence it is that all those that see him, do not possess him; but*

in

in Heaven God will be seen without Vails and Reflexions. His light will be a direct light, which will fill us throughout; it was a comfort to the Patriarchs and holy men of old, to have the hope of Christ's appearance; they saw his day afar off, and they rejoiced; but how much more is it to that soul that has actually seen him come, and not only spreading his beams to remove the general darkness of the world, but shining with a peculiar light and heat into its self. It is peculiarity that endears the most of things to us; our own Friends, our own Relations, our own Joys, are the most pleasant. It is not from Christ's being singly considered as a Mediator, that we derive this comfort; but from the reflexion that we are able to make of our happiness in him; it is that which creates the sweetest motions in our hearts. Before this propriety, there may be a calmness of spirit, and lesser degrees of Complacency, expressing themselves in love, and hope, and desire; but 'tis the actual possession of a good as our own, that is the Parent of a real joy; the Christian may find some comfort in beholding the Incarnation, the Sufferings, and the Promise of his second Coming; but when the soul can say, He died and rose again for me; this touches it with a very lively satisfaction, and makes it say as in *Hab. 3. 17.*

C H A P. VIII.

Of the further Properties of the Joy that comes to a Soul after long desertion. 'Tis Irresistible, tho usually Gradual; it revives the body and the natural spirits. It fills the late mourner with the hope of Glory, and causes him to express his delight to others. From all which we may justly admire the Wisdom of the Divine Providence.

7. **T**His Joy is Irresistible. As all the darknesses of the Night cannot hinder the approach of the welcome day; so neither can all our doubts, nor our fears, nor all the horrors of the Night hinder the beams of God's favour, when he is pleased to shine upon us. *Job 34. 29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?* Notwithstanding all the directions and the helps that our Ministers, or our friends give us in our trouble, we refuse to be comforted; but when he speaks the word, we must obey. He creates the fruit of the lips; peace, peace; and we can no more resist his Almighty power, than the first Chaos could withstand his Command, when in the Language of a God he spoke, and said, *Let there be Light.* Our escape from our Spiritual troubles bears some proportion with the Resurrection of our Lord from the Dead; as that was owing not to a power ordinary, or created, so neither is ours; but to a power

power that is Cœlestial and Divine. It was not, as * one observes, the effect of the Power of * *Claude*
 God in the ways of nature, such as is the Ri- *Traite de*
 sing of the Sun; the Return of Seasons, the *Jesu Christ*
 Fruitfulness of the Earth; but the effect of a *Liv. v. 12.*
 power altogether Infinite and Supernatural; it is not according to the usual Laws of Nature, or the course of Ordinary Providence.

8. *This Joy is usually Gradual, and not all at once:* I say usually, for sometimes persons in great distress and agonies of soul, have been suddenly relieved in their darkest Night, and in the deepest Dungeon a great Light has shined upon them; so that those that have one hour cried out, they were damned, and lost; have the next triumphed in the hope of glory; and from the fear of Hell have come to a glorious view of Heaven to their own exceeding comfort, and the comfort of all that heard them. But tho God may do what he pleases, this is not his ordinary way; as the Night comes, and the Sun goes down by degrees, so does the morning come, and the Sun arise by the same degrees; as it rarely happens that any fall into great distress of Conscience, on a sudden, some lesser afflictions make way for greater strokes; so seldom are any comforted immediately, but their comfort comes like the break of day; there are some faint streaks of light, some little supports, and quiet hopes before the Sun arise. And God in this accommodates himself to the weakness of our nature; for a sudden passage from a great Affliction to a great Joy, is a thing which our tender nature is hardly capable to bear; and usually the Consciences of those

that have been very long terrified and afflicted, begin to be calm; as the humours of the body, that have been disordered, return to their Ancient course; for so long as the Spirits and the Blood are disordered, so long the Soul will unavoidably be in some unpleasant agitation.

9. *This joy has a pleasant influence on the Body, and revives that, with the reviving mind;* they fall sick and droop, and they recover and rejoyce together. When God is our God, it causes health in our Countenances, as well as pleasure in our Hearts; and though I know that abundance of poor people, that have been long amazed with the fear of God's Wrath, have very feeble, sickly Bodies to the day of death; yet this calmness and peace of mind does greatly mitigate their pains, and pour Honey and Sweetness into the most bitter Cup: For what is it that makes affliction, in trouble of mind, to be so intollerable, but that the afflicted person looks upon it as the beginning of sorrows, as a few drops before a more dreadful storm, and as the introduction to hell and woe? But when the sting of guilt is removed, and sin is pardoned, the yolk sits very easie on their shoulders, that used to gall them before. Prov. 15.

13. *A merry heart maketh a chearful countenance.* Joy as well as grief, cannot be dissembled, if it be real and very strong. Joy in the Heart, is like the Rain at the Root of the Grass, it will, after being moistned to the bottom, appear much more green and flourishing. Prov. 17.

22. *A merry heart doth good like a medicine.* Even that chearfulness which arises from natural and ordinary Causes, is very healthful, and adds ve-

ry much to the strength and vigour of the body ; much more then will that joy promote it, which is founded on the Word of God, and on the hope of his Acceptance. And no question *David* had a respect to this, when he said, *Psal. 111. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce. Ps. 35. 10. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like to thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him ; and the needy from him that spoileth him !* No troubles waite our natural spirits more than our inward griefs and fears ; no joys refresh and make them more sprightly than the joys of our Souls. See *Job 33. 19, to 26. God is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom, his flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth, he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable to him, and he shall see his face with joy.* Those that have writ of Long Life, and the means to obtain it, advise us to keep our minds always full of splendid and illustrious objects, of Histories, and the contemplations of Nature, and the like ; but *the best Medicine is a quiet Conscience* : And tho all our Religion will not, indeed, save us from sickness, yet it will enable us to bear it ; not to be too much concerned and overwhelmed with the manifold and unavoidable Calamities of this mortal Life. This is Joy, indeed, that will recreate our souls and our bodies too ; that will prepare the one for its passage to Glory, and the other for its lying in the Grave. Thus our soul, which is our glory, shall rejoyce, and our flesh also shall rest in hope, *Psal. 16. 9.* and both at length, as they

they have mourn'd, so rejoyce together, and that for evermore: For when God is pleased to speak, and to help us both in our bodies and our souls, 'tis *multiplied Salvation*, and many thousand Cures in one.

The *third General* is, *That Joy arises from the hope of some future Good*; and this good must be both *very agreeable to the soul*, and *very certain*: For if it be not so, there cannot be any other than a weak and a trembling joy. There is a great pleasure in expectation of what is to come, if it be great, and lasting, and attainable; now to one that hath the returning-sense of God's favour, 'tis very pleasant to look for that hour or day, or rather for that *cheerful Eternity*, when he shall have the same reviving smiles of his heavenly Father in a more bright and conspicuous manner; when not only the night of weeping is gone, but that morning is come which shall *shine more and more to a perfect day*. And thus will the comfortable person say, If the tast that I have now of God be so sweet, Oh! what will the full enjoyment of him be! If in this strange Land, I am entertained, as with the Bread of Angels, What Feasts will refresh me when I am at home! when I am past the Storms, and beyond the Grave, and Sin and Tears shall give me no further molestation! The first Fruits make them to long for the full Harvest; thus says the Apostle, *We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God*; and this made the Church to say, *Make hast, O my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the mountains of spices*. Expectation of any main event. (as one says) is a great advantage to a wise heart. If the fiery Chariot

Chariot had fetcht away *Elias* unlookt for, we should have doubted of the favour of his Transportation.

4. *This Morning-Joy will express it self. As our griefs cause us to groan and sigh, so does this make us in an open pleasant way, to manifest our gladness.* The reviving sense of God's favour, does so fill our hearts, that we cannot, without dishonour to him, and prejudice to our selves, conceal, or stifle it. When we apprehend our selves to be happy, we take a peculiar pleasure in communicating to others the notice of that happiness; and are much more pleased by such a communication. This Joy is always attended with an expression of the Mercies of our Deliverer, that we cannot but say to our Brethren, *Come and behold what God has wrought for us!* Behold what Salvation his own Arm and Power has accomplished! so *Psal. 51. 12. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit; then will I teach transgressors, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* Then I shall be able to tell them, That thy ways, however rugged they seem to be for a while, yet are at length even and pleasant ways; That they lead to Life and Happiness; and beholding the beams of thy Love, that make me so pleasant and so chearful, they shall by such a sight, be encouraged also to Religion. And to the same purpose, *Psal. 16. 9. My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:* His inward Joy was not able to contain it self. We testify our pleasure on lower occasions, even at the gratification of our senses; when our Ear is filled with harmonious melody; when our Eye is fixed upon admirable and beauteous objects;

jects; when our Smell is recreated with agreeable odours; and our tast is so, by the delicacy and rareness of Provisions; and much more will our soul shew its delight, when its faculties that are of a more exquisite constitution, meet with things that are in all respects agreeable and pleasant to them; and in God they meet with all these; with his Light our Understanding is refresh'd, and so is our Will, with his Goodness and his Love. So in *Psal. 126. 1, 2.* *When the Lord turn'd again the captivity of Sion, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* It was a sign their hearts were very full of joy, seeing the mouth and the tongue poured it out in so great abundance; nay, their Neighbours could not but take notice of it, *They said among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them, far beyond the methods of an ordinary Providence.* Their Liberty was strange and miraculous, that surpassed all Imaginable Reasons; and, behold, as people take delight to go over and over again with a pleasant thing, they Eccho to this saying of the Heathens, saying, *Verse 3, The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.* Others knew it only by report, that God had been so good to them; but they by sweet experience. In the delivered people, it was, indeed, an inward Jubilation, with a loud Cry, and Song of Triumph; as when God is withdrawn, we are forced to speak in the anguish and bitterness of our Souls; so when he returns, the return is so pleasant, that we cannot hold our tongues. In our troubles there is a latent grief, so sinking and so very sad, that no words

can express; so in the good hope of God's acceptance, there is a sweetness that cannot be declared; *Ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. We dare not give a particular relation of our grievous sufferings, lest we should discourage many poor people, that are apt enough of themselves to sink and be discouraged: or if we would, we cannot, they are so very terrible. So the sight of God, after long darkness, fills us with wonder, and with pleasing astonishment; we feel we are delighted, but we cannot fully tell what it is to be so; and sometimes we are in such transporting joys, that like the blessed Apostle, when he had the view of Paradise, whether we are in the Body or out of it, we scarcely know; The poor soul is so transported, that it is every way surrounded with delight. Will God dwell in such an heart as mine, that has been so full of murmurings, and so full of unbelief! Will he pardon and accept of me! Shall I that was doomed to dye, in my own sad thoughts, have the hope of glory! and instead of my slavish fears from the dread of Hell, have the sight of Heaven! Shall I be his Favourite, of whom I had such hard and unbecoming thoughts! Oh! what Grace is this! how unlook'd for! how undeserved! and yet how suitable! *Is this the manner of men, O Lord God!* Is this thy kind usage of a poor sinner, and of so great a sinner as I have been! This is Grace indeed! this is all free Love and Mercy! How can this be past over in silence? Such a person escaped after such apprehensions of so near a danger, is like the Lame Man that was healed, *He leaping up stood*

stood and walked, and entred into the Temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, Acts 3. 8, 9. and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which happened unto him. As inward anguish causes the distressed many times to roar out vehemently; so heavy is the load that presses them, on the contrary, when the fear of Wrath is removed, they rejoyce with shouting, and with a loud voice, like those that Conquer, or reap the Harvest: For as when a Man is under inward anguish and tribulation, he looks upon himself as a Beacon fired on a Hill, to give warning to others, and to shew them the danger of Sin; so when he comes to peace and hope again, he wishes that he might be placed as on a Mountain, and enabled to trumpet out to all the World *the Riches of the Grace of God*; that as none may presume when they see his misery, so none may despair when they see his safety, and his escape from that misery.

Inf. 1. *The Wisdom and the Beauty of the Divine Providence.* That as in the World there is a comfortable Succession of Night and Day, so in his Servants mourning, after the Sorrows of the Night, the Joy of the morning comes; this Night comes, and this morning dawns when it is most proper for it so to do. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time, Eccl. 3. 11.* The Storms, and Rain, and Cold of Winter, are as beneficial to the Universe, as the Summers heat. Tho we from our Self-love, judge of God, either with more admiring, or less becoming Thoughts, as he deals well or ill with us; but it is not particiular Churches, nor particiular

lar Persons that God only regards, but his whole Creation; his Providences to us contribute to the good of that. We know not to what uses God will put us; but it ought something to support us to think in what state soever we are, we are serving his Design; how pressing, and how violent soever our Dangers and Tribulations are, he can save us even by methods contrary to those which our Reason apprehends; by throwing us down, he can make us to be more established; and by seeming to destroy us, promote our welfare; he can make unlikely things to advance his purpose. 'Tis many times more dark just before the break of day; and the going back of the Sun on the Dial of *Abaz*, was to be a sign of *Hezekiah*'s longer Life, *Isaiah* 38. 8. Therefore (if you will allow me a small digression) 'tis a very evil thing for men to censure the Providence of God, because of the present Miferies that he suffers his Servants to be afflicted with; there are many that think it a piece of Zealous Loyalty not to blame their Superiors for the higher Matters of Government, which are above their reach, and yet dare to Arraign at their Bar the Supreme Ruler of the World; if what he does be not according to the Model of their Fancies, or suitable to their Imaginations; or because, whilest others are gratified, their Humours are crost and disappointed; not considering that the difference and variety of Circumstances amongst particular Men are necessary to the general and publick Good. To censure God, and to reflect upon his Conduct, is as if a Country Clown who never travelled beyond the Smoak of his own Cottage, should

condemn

condemn the Proclamation of a King, or the Votes of a Parliament, when he does not know the great Reasons of State that these Actions depend upon. But as St. Basil observes, When Men are first crossed in their Worldly Affairs, they begin for want of Patience to doubt, whether God in very deed regardeth the things of this World, whether he take notice of particular Men; when they see no end of their Miseries, but one evil continually is attended with another, they are blasphemously apt to think there is no God. God can bring Affliction to try and manifest the Graces of his People; as the Stars, that are a chief part of the Glory of the World, are then most illustrious and visible when the day is gone; and then he makes the Sun to rise again, that displays new Objects to us. The Rods of God are many times very sharp, but at last we shall find that they were dipt in Honey, and managed with Love. The Conduct of Providence is always Wise and Good, but very often Mysterious and Unfathomable, and in nothing more so, then in his bringing abundance of his Servants to Heaven by the very Gates of Hell; and in suffering Satan to buffet and to vex them, that they may triumph over him in the latter end. He makes them to be in great perplexities, that the sweet wonders of his deliverance may the more appear. *We went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place,* Psal. 66. 12. Thus he preserved Moses in a Cradle of Bull-rushes, and would not suffer the great Infant to perish, though he was in manifest danger, either to be carried away by the force of the water,

Water, or to be devoured by *Crocodiles*, with which that River did abound. So was *Noah* preserved in the Ark, not by any Art in Navigation, but by the Government and Conduct of God himself. He hastens deliverance many times, when it seems to be at the remotest distance; *In the Evening it shall be light*, in a season when it was not to be expected. In all his works of Nature and of Grace, he makes things, that having a seeming contrariety to what he designs, to further his design. Thus (some observe) the Earth hangs upon nothing in the midst of the fluid Air, though it be the most heavy of all the Elements; he renders it fruitful for the Production of all necessary things, though it be of it self cold and dry; and so the Sea, which by its situation is above the Earth, and does seem to threaten it with new deluges, yet is kept in its own Channels; for after it has been raised even to the Clouds in threatening Waves, its fury dies again into a Calm, and observes the bounds that God has set it: Thus our Lord Jesus also works; By being Tempted, he Conquer'd the Tempter; and by Dying, he subdued Death; and so at the sending of the Spirit, first the House shook and trembled, and then it was filled with the Glory of the Lord: First, deep Sorrows, and then as mighty Joys. First, *John*, Rev. 14. 2. *heard a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and then the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and that sang a new song before the throne.* A due consideration of the Providences of God will keep us from the absurd Opinion of the Heathens, That the Deity envied

the felicity of Men, and that he who was most prosperous, was near to a sudden overthrow : And even the Learned Men among them were so apprehensive of it, that they durst not acknowledge their own, tho but ordinary welfare, without an excuse. See instances of this, in Dr. Casaubon's *Original Cause of Temporal Evils*. Upon this account *Augustus*, in whose days the Saviour of the World was born, once in the year turned Beggar, and received Alms of such of the Common people as would give him; He mistrusted his own felicity, and dreaded that, so frightful in those days, *Invidiam Numinis*. The Heathens had but parcels of the Scripture, and those too by Tradition much adulterated; no wonder if they made a contrary use of it; and by sad experience, finding the effects of *Adam's Fall*, and God's Curse, and not well informed of all particulars, the Devil also being busie with them, as he was with *Eve*, to promote a misapprehension of God, as if he were envious*; whereas upon due consideration, what in the Judgment of blind and corrupt nature seemed envy and malignity, will appear Mercy, being used by God as a profitable Medicine, or Antidote against the greatest and most dangerous infection of the Soul; for crosses and afflictions in this World, are not effects of envy in the supreme dispenser of all things; but Arguments of his Goodness and Providence. *All things shall work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. Sickness and Health, Poverty and Riches, Anguish, and Fear, and Horror, shall contribute to their Salvation; and in the most fiery Furnaces, and the most painful Troubles, they shall find the refreshments of

* See Dr. Casaubon, p. 27.

of his Grace. His Providences work together; they are in Concert, and are not to be taken apart, like a Composition of divers Ingredients; for there are some that, if taken alone, might kill the patient; but when they are joyned with others, which by their contrary qualities temper their excess, they do marvellous things, being † *Frags-* counterpoized †: God many times lets our *mens de* darkness stay long, that we may know what a *Morus, p.* pleasant thing it is to see the light. 62.

C H A P. IX.

Of the different ends that God hath in the Afflictions of the Good and the Wicked; and what Reason we have to be reconciled to his Providence: And that we must be satisfied that God carries us to Heaven in his own Way and Method.

Inf. 2. **T**His shews us the different ends that God has in the afflictions of the Good and of the Wicked: To the one they are Medicinal, to the other Penal; to the one in Love, to the other in Wrath; to the one, the shadows of an Eternal night; and to the other the forerunners of the morning. Often his people are thrown down by their Fears, by Satan, and the World; but as often may they say, *Rejoyce not against me, O my enemy, &c.* They may be dejected, but they may say with *David*, *O my soul, hope still on God, &c.* Afflictions (as one says) are common to the good and bad, as the entrance into the bottom of the Sea was to the *Israelites* and to the *Egyptians*; but the *Israelites* conducted by a Cloud and a Pillar of Fire, were

* *Faucheur*
Sermons,
first part,
P. 132.

inlightned, and assured, and passed in safety, and came out praising God; but to the *Egyptians*, this Cloud that separated them was full of darkness, and they were drowned in the Waves, whilest the others stood upon the dry Land; so God comforts his people by the light of his Word, and the support of hope from his holy Promises; whereas the wicked are finally swallowed up of sadness and despair. The Righteous fall, and they rise again; but the feet of the Wicked stumble on the dark Mountains, and never rise again: Tho, indeed, as the same person observes *, Even as the *Chaldeans* formerly measured their natural day differently from the *Israelites*, they put the day first, and the night after; but the *Israelites* on the contrary, according to the order that was observed in the Creation, for in the beginning darkness was upon the face of the deep, and of every one of the six days it is said, *The evening and the morning made the first day*. So the times of the World, and of the Church, are differently disposed, for the World begins hers by the day of temporal prosperity, and finishes it by a night of darkness and anguish that is Eternal; but the Church, on the contrary, begins hers by the night of Adversity, which she suffers for a while, and ends them by a day of Consolation which she shall have for ever. The Prophet in this *Psalms*, begins with the Anger of God, but ends with his Favour; as of old, when they entred into the Tabernacle, they did at first see unpleasant things, as the Knives of the Sacrificers, the Blood of Victims, the Fire that burn'd upon the Altar, which consumed the Offerings; but when they passed a little further, there was the Holy Place, the Candlestick of Gold, the Shew-bread,

bread, and the Altar of Gold, on which they offered Perfumes; and in fine, there was the Holy of Holies, and the Ark of the Covenant, and the Mercy-Seat, and the Cherubims, which was called the Face of God *.

Inf. 3. *This may then reconcile you to his Providence.* The night of trouble makes you not to see the Beauty of the Church; but tho she is black, she is comely still; he that makes his *Sun to shine upon the unthankful and the Evil*, will not always cover himself with Clouds from his own People: His common care has provided for the pleasure of his Creatures, fruit to delight their Tasts; and Flowers, and various Colours, their Eyes, and their smell; Rivers, and Trees, and Meadows, and Groves, and all the variety of Nature, to recreate and entertain them; and if all this Accommodation be made for Rebels, he will not fail to entertain his Subjects with joys of a better kind. *Joy is sown for the Righteous*, and it will arise in the time of Harvest, and that time will shortly come. If God have done so much to gratify the senses of his Creatures with suitable satisfactions, the Souls of his People that are more Noble, shall not be disappointed of such as are Coelestial and Divine; for joy is that which with a sweet violence does attract the heart of Man; God regards the distressed, and has a peculiar pity for those that are in the greatest trouble *; as Mothers tend, with a peculiar care, the weakest Child. The World, indeed, admires, flatters, waits upon those on whom the Sun shines, and who are in a prosperous condition; as Rivers run into the Sea where there is no need of Water, so it heaps its friendships and kindneses on those that least need them, and forsakes the disgraced,

* *Musford.*
Sermons
for divers
Texts, p.
30.

† *Manton*
Serm. on
2 Thes. 2.
17. P. 432.

the poor, and those that are in want; but God, when his Servants are in the greatest troubles, encourages them by his Name, which is *The Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolations*; he is most mindful of them, and visits them most, and gives them most of his comfortable presence, when they are most afflicted, *2 Cor. 1. 4. He comforteth us in all our tribulations.* He will not give them a constant ease, they shall not be excused from the common inconveniencies of the Fall, from sickness, or from death, but himself is willing to be their own portion; he is, in all, their own God: They shall labour, but they shall have rest; they shall fight, but he will Crown their heads with Victory; *they shall sow in tears, but reap in joy.* The Waves and the Floods that now overwhelm them, shall be turned into Rivers of pleasure for evermore.

The Use of Exhortation is in these following Particulars.

1. Be very well satisfied that God carry you to Heaven in the way that he thinks most proper; It were indeed a thing very desirable to be at ease, to travel with his light about us; but if we must go through darkness, and danger, and calamity, to Heaven, let us be satisfied that his will is done, tho we go weeping and groaning thither. You'll think, perhaps, that he deserves not the name of a Christian, that will not suffer God to guide him any way, so it be to Salvation; but alas, how few are there, that are satisfied with his methods! when his Candle shines upon our Tabernacle, we are well enough pleased; but when he begins to correct and chasten us for a long season, then we murmur and repine; and when
we

we meet with difficulties and tears, and troubles one upon another, then we think he is an hard Master: this is our common case, and our common folly. We can all make the Prayer of *Jabez*, 1 Chron. 4. 10. *Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me:* But how few can say heartily with our Blessed Lord, *If the Cup must not pass, thy will be done?* He could bring you to Heaven without a tear or a sigh; but if not, who can resist his order, or blame his Providence? He led the Children of *Israel* forty years wandring to and fro in a great and a terrible *Wilderness*, wherein were fiery *Serpents*, and *Scorpions*, and drought, and no water, Deut. 8. 15. when he could have led them quickly to the Land of *Canaan*. You must not think to come to Heaven without many a sad heart, and many weeping eyes; through the vally of *Babba* must you travel to the Mount of God. The Ark that had a *Noah* in it, did not immediately rest; it was not in one day that the great waters did abate, or fall into their old Channels; your passage to glory may be safe, tho it be very troublesome; and the rods that seem to be the most painful, may be most necessary to you; for tho the *Israelites* met with various troubles, yet *Psal.* 107. 7. *He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a City of habitation.* It may be you shall be shipwrackt into the Haven; and tho you be saved, yet it shall be so as by fire. Through many a sharp Cross, and many a bitter Tribulation, and in the fire, your Comforts and your Ease may suffer loss for a time, but it

shall be made up again : Afflictions ruin none that belong to God ; and many a Christian shall say at last, *I had perished, if I had not perished. I had been undone for ever, if I had not been afflicted.* Out of the ruins of the flesh, God raises the glorious structure of the new Creature ; and from the destruction of our Earthly comforts, he causes Heavenly joys to spring ; let us not find fault with God's Providence, for it will turn *our water into wine* ; our tears of grief, into the most pleasant joys : And as at the Marriage of *Cana*, we shall have the best at last. Our Afflictions will encrease our Grace, and we shall ere long mount up from the Wilderness of this world, fraught *with Myrrh and Frankincense, and all the spices of the Merchants.* Let us not find fault if we meet with the waters of *Marah* in our Journey to the Land of Promise*. Thirst and bitterness is the portion of Pilgrims, 'Tis enough for us that we shall have rest at last, tho we must not expect that the Providence of God should go out of its ordinary course for us. Let us confide in his Goodness, his Faithfulness, and Loving-kindness, his Word and Promise, this is the quiet harbour into which we must put our trembling souls ; these are the Consolations that will make our bitter waters sweet. Submit therefore to God, to him pour out your hearts, tho you be long afflicted, and with one wave upon another.

* Hall on
the Marriage
in *Cana*,
p. 162.

C H A P. X.

The Conclusion of the whole Treatise. With directions to such who have been formerly in the darkness of a sorrowful Night, and now enjoy the light of day.

2. **L**et us, with whom it was once Night, improve that Morning-joy that now shines upon us, and that briefly in these particulars.

1. *Let us be continual admirers of God's Grace and mercy to us*: He has prevented us with his Goodness, when he saw nothing in us but impatience and unbelief; when we were like *Jonas in the belly of Hell*, his Bowels earned over us, and his Power brought us safe to Land. What did we to hasten his deliverance; or to obtain his mercy? If he had never come to our relief, till he saw something in us to invite him, we had not yet been relieved. No more did we contribute to our Restoration, then we do to the rising of the Sun, or the approach of day: We were like those dry bones without motion, and without strength, *Ezek 37. 1.* And we also said, *That we were cut off for our parts, and our hope was gone, and he caused breath to enter into us, and we live.* Who is a God like to our God, that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin? that retains not his anger for ever? that is slow to wrath, and delights in mercy? That has been displeased with us for a moment, but gives us hope of his Everlasting kindness? Oh! what love is due from us to Christ, that has pleaded for us when we our selves had nothing to say! that has brought us out of a den of Lions, and from the Jaws of the Roaring Lion!

To

* See her
Life writ-
ten by Mr.
Jesse, pag.
40.

To say as Mrs. Sarah Wight did *, I have obtained mercy, that thought my time of mercy past for ever. I have hope of heaven, that thought I was already damned by unbelief. I said many a time, there is no hope in thine end, and I thought I saw it. I was so desperate, I cared not what became of me: Oft was I at the very brink of death and hell, even at the very Gates of both, and then Christ shut them. I was as Daniel in the Lions Den, and he stopt the mouth of those Lions, and delivered me. The Goodness of God is unsearchable; how great is the excellency of his Majesty, that yet he would look upon such an one as I! that he has given me peace that was full of terror, and walked continually as amidst fire and brimstone!

2. Let us walk humbly, and be full of cautious fear, that we offend not a God that is so terrible, and that we grieve not a Benefactor that is so good. Let us walk softly all our days, remembering there was but a step between us and Hell. Oh! let us put our mouths in the dust, let us lothe and abhor our selves for the manifold iniquities that we were guilty of during the darkness of the Night; and now the Morning is come, and such a Morning as we never hoped to see, let us walk as children of the day; that so being come out of the Furnace, we may be as Gold that is refined.

3. Tho we do rejoice, yet we must rejoice with trembling; with trembling, lest another Night so black, so frightful, and so dismal come upon us. Let our obedience be more lively, and as the tender grass springing out of the Earth by clear shining after rain; but let us remember, that our joy is not yet perfect, tho it be as the light of the Morning when the Sun riseth; It is not a Morning without clouds, 2 Sam. 23. 4. The Sun will be Clouded with ma-

ny Fogs and Mists, for 'tis but yet a Morning-Sun, it will shine with greater glory in its height, when the Noon-day, and our compleat Salvation comes. The Devil that has tempted us will assault us again; Let us *watch*, that his designs may not take effect; for it may be he has but left us for a season; alas! our unbelief and our other sins, are not yet wholly dead. Let us rejoice that the Face of God now shines on us; but let us tremble to think what would become of us, should it be hid again. Let us rejoice that we have good hope through grace; but let us tremble, lest *despair, and the pains of Hell* should again take hold upon us. The fear that we have of future suffering, does somewhat now diminish the brightness of our joy; tho we ought not to live under the perpetual bondage of such fears, but trust in God, and hope that he will *be our guide even unto death*. We are brought indeed out of *the miry pit, and the deep clay*; yet we cannot but tremble at our foregoing misery. We are like a Person, that after a Shipwreck, has with great difficulty upon a Plank got safe to Land, he finds himself in a place assured, and rejoices in it; nevertheless the noise of the Waves, and the great agitation that he was so lately in, makes him tremble: He remains a good while astonished at his former danger, and his present safety. Let us not have a trembling of distrust, but of vigilance, and of holy care; not to doubt of the Promises of God, but to keep down our own pride, and carnal security. Let us pray, that as he has *set our feet upon a rock*, so he *would establish our goings*: remembering how low we have fallen, into what depths, and under what Calamities, we have constant cause to be afraid

fraid. *Pf. 149. 6. Let the high praises of God be in our mouths, and a two-edged Sword in our hands ; Let us be as those Soldiers, who tho they have newly gotten the victory over their Enemies, and rejoice for it ; yet amidst all their Acclamations stand upon their guard, lest the remainder of those that are unsubdued, should rally their scattered Forces, and attacque them again to their disadvantage.*

3. *We must be very active in the service of our good God. We must begin to travel whilst the morning lasts, and whilst we have day before us.*

4. *Our mouths must be full of praise to him that has delivered us. Shall we not praise him, to whom we vowed praises when we were in trouble? Shall we not praise him, who alone has wrought salvation for us? none but he could help us, and he has done it. Magnificently has he delivered us, far above all our hopes. Oh, how much more pleasant is it to you, and me, to call him Father, than to fear him as a Judge ! How much more pleasant to celebrate his praises, than to mourn for his departure ; to tune our Harps after our Captivity, than to have them hanging on the Willows ! Oh, Let us praise him, for he deserves our praise ; Let us praise him, for he hath remembered us in our low estate : Let us praise him, for his Terrors, his Rebukes, and his Frowns are gone ; *Psal. 116. 1, 2. &c. Psal. 37. 6. The Lightning and Thunder, the horror and the darkness of the tempestuous night is over, and a chearful and a calm day now revives us. Let us praise him, for he is infinitely excellent ; Let us praise him, for he expects our praise. So David, Psal. 116. 1, 2, 3, 5. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications, because he hath inclined his ear to me,*
there-*

therefore will I call upon him as long as I live ; the sorrows of death compassed me , and the pains of hell gat hold upon me , I found trouble and sorrow. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous, yea our God is merciful. And Ps. 27. 6. Now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me : Therefore will I offer in his Tabernacle sacrifices of joy ; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. Did we ever hope to see the Light of God again ? Did we ever hope to think of Heaven as our own portion, and of Christ as our own Saviour ? Did we ever hope that we should be thus at ease, and thus joyful as we now are ? God is our helper, God is our refuge, and our strong hold ; and blessed be the name of the Lord.

5. Let us call upon our Brethren, and our Friends, to help us to praise the Lord ; *Psal. 145. 2, 3, 8, 9, 14. as to my self I make these requests ; Bless the Lord, O house of Aaron and Levi : Bless him ye Ministers of the Gospel that prayed for me in my trouble, and have had your prayers granted : Bless the Lord, O House of Israel, and all ye people every-where that sympathized, and also kindly remembred me in my desolate condition : Bless him ye Old men, that you have got so far towards the haven, without being thrown into the waves, and so much endangered by the Rocks as I have been. Bless him, that you have not met with such violent tentations, and great sorrows as I have met withal, though I set out long after you. Bless the Lord ye Young men, that you have not been weakned in the way with sore affliction, and with the terrors of the Lord, which I long groaned under. Bless him every one both small and great, against whom he does not proceed in such smart and severe Providences, and in such long*

long and sharp Afflictions. Bless him, that you see before your eyes, and to help your faith, *a person lately brought from the borders of the Grave, and Hell*; one for whom you were concerned, and for whom you prayed, and *one that still needs, and beg your prayers*, that he may never come to such a sad and doleful night again. It is a common Custom to *congratulate our Friends* recovery from sickness, or when they return from some Foreign Land; but nothing does more deserve our common thanks, than when a Person is come from under the sense of God's displeasure, to a sense of his favour and love again. Thus it was with *Job*, ch. 42. 11. *Then came there to him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house; and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him*: And with a design of exciting others to praise God with him, is that, *Psal. 66. 16. Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul*. Or as the Father of the Prodigal to his obedient Son, that repined at the kind usage that he gave to him that was less dutiful, upon his returning home; *Luke 15. 32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found*. It is the design of God that the great and eminent Deliverances which he gives to some of his Servants, should be taken notice of by all the rest; that as they usually bring along with them a common Benefit, so he should have a common return of praise; *Pf. 66. 8. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard, which holdeth our souls in life, and*
suf-

suffereth not our feet to be moved. And the joining with others that have been in great distress, and are escaped, is to answer the Obligation we are under to that Precept, *To rejoice with them that do rejoice.* And an encouragement to those who are yet in trouble, *Pf. 130. 7. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plentiful redemption.* And to those that yet are at ease, we may say as *Paul to Fælix*, that we wish they were such as we, in some respects, that is, excepting our bonds, our anguish and tribulation; that they also had such experiences of the goodness, and the mercy of God.

6. *Let us always wait and hope for that eternal Felicity, which will at length dawn upon all his people, in the great morning of the Resurrection;* and at their entrance into Heaven there will be joy indeed. *There is no night there;* 'tis a place that is continually blest with a bright and shining day. It is true (as one says) that as in nature the nights are not equal, those of the Winter are much longer than those of the Summer; but how long soever they be, they are always followed with the light of day; so whatsoever diversity there is among the Afflictions of the faithful, to one they are much longer than to another; yet they shall have an end; as *Jacob* wrestled all night, but in the morning got the victory. I confess that Sinners in this World have their pleasures, but so beset with thorns, so attended with fears and pains, so short, and so vanishing, that they deserve not the name. But in Heaven the Sun that rises in the morning of our new Glory, will never set again; those pleasures are not like those of Sin, for a season, but for evermore. There our now imperfect Joy will be compleat and full. It will be satisfying and eternal too. We shall feel the love of God in so sweet and transporting a manner, that we shall never doubt whether he loves us or not. We shall *always behold our Father's face*, he will look on us with delight, and we shall look on him with praise and joy. This world, because of its lowness, is
subl

subject to Inundations and Miseries, and innumerable Vicissitudes of Pain and Grief; but that high and glorious World is the place of Triumph, and of Victory; then we shall see our *Sin* that made us weep, to be it self totally defeated; then we shall see that *Devil* that tempted us, to be trod under our feet, and never to be able to tempt us any more. Let us often remember that saying of our Lord, John 16.21, 22. *A woman, when she is in travel, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the Child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoyce, and your joy shall no man take from you.* Oh! what a glorious morning will that be, that shall have no cloud to obscure its light, and never be followed with a sad or gloomy night? As our sufferings here did abound, our Consolations then will much more abound. We shall forget all our Labour, and all our trouble, when we see to what a glorious Kingdom we are born, tho it was by pangs and torment; our joy will be like the joy of Harvest, of an Harvest that will requite us well for all our care and toil. Our hopes here are like the first streaks of light in the Sky, that shew the coming of the day; but our possession of blessedness will be as the Sun in the fulness of his Glory. That delight will indeed be the Sabbath of our thoughts, and the sweet, and perpetual calmness of our minds, that will never be in horror and anguish any more. Precious and ^{very} desirable are those Tears that end so well, and which prepare us for so good a state; who would not chuse thus to weep, that he may rejoyce for ever? Lift up your eyes to the *Jerusalem* above, the City of the Living God, ye Mourners and Prisoners of hope, for it is the City of Peace, Rev. 21.3, 4. *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.*

T H E E N D.

